

DIMITROV

A Biography by B. D. Blagoyara



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DIMITROV

WITH
A FOREWORD BY
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

With comradely apologies to Messrs. Martin Lawrence, we are offering to our readers here, a biography of Georgi Dimitrov, with the full text of his Reichstag Trial Speech.

This biography was published first in 1936. In order, therefore, to bring it up-to-date, we have added an introduction written by a well-known Marxist.

Dimitrov is a Bulgarian. And Bulgaria was for so long being safely used as Hitler's Balkan Branch-Office. Like so many others, the Bulgarian and the Balkan people have suffered miserably under the erstwhile triumphant fascists.

The day of liberation, however, has already come. Anti-fascist feeling swells high. And how can we fail recalling today the historic stand taken up by Dimitrov as early as in 1933 during the Reichstag fire fiasco !

FOREWORD

It is good to have available in India this reprint of perhaps the only biography in English of the great Bulgarian revolutionary who has been well known on the continent since 1912 but shot into world prominence with his epic defence against Hitler's court in Leipzig eleven years ago. That was an occasion, to be remembered always, when Dimitrov flayed fascism as it had never been flayed before.

Starting life as a working-printer in his native Bulgaria, Dimitrov grew in stature as he gave his mind and heart to the task of organising his fellow-workers into trade unions. From 1912 to 1918, he led them in the fight against imperialist war and the diabolic preparation for it. Again, in 1923, he mobilised them against fascism which had overthrown the democratic government of his country and with its foul claws gripped Bulgaria as in a vice. Finally, in 1933, he appeared in the Leipzig court as the defender of all that is best in humanity against the offensive dramatically prepared by Hitler and his minions.

Ralph Fox, the writer in arms who died fighting fascism in Spain, once suggested that the story of the Reichstag arson was one that an artist should have taken up and given it life. The atmosphere was unforgettable: Berlin on the eve of Hitler's *coup*, a kind of feverish madness in the streets and beer-halls; Social Democrats hoping with precarious complacency that no real danger impended; Communists, farther-sighted than others, preparing to carry on the fight in secret; and the upper bourgeoisie engrossed in the exciting gamble of making sure, with their purse and their *Reichswehr*, that the Weimar constitution was scrapped, lock, stock and barrel.

The ravings of a perverted pyromaniac, the Dutchman Van der Lubbe, who slept in low-down doss-houses and talked in terms of demented bravado about burning down the corrupt Reichstag and becoming himself a hero into the bargain, were reported to their masters by Nazi spies, and so the stage was set for what Hitler and his crew had dreamt was going to be the St. Bartholomew of their new mythology.

Into this witch's Sabbath, to quote Ralph Fox again, there fell accidentally three sane men, Bulgarian communist refugees. They were precisely the people whom Hitler, the evangelist of the master-race, needed badly; they were Balkan "barbarians" from whose congenital incendiarism the Nazi leader professed to be saving humanity. Another man was hauled in among the accused—a typical lower middle class German, Torgler by name, who had led communist deputies in the Reichstag, but with a naive faith in the workings of German law, however prejudiced its Nazi executants, had given himself up to the police to prove his utter innocence of the unthinkable charge of burning the Reichstag building.

Day and night the four men remained chained in prison, isolated from one another and the world outside, tormented by threats of a degrading death. It broke Torgler's back, who had a job of it to try and keep a semblance of self-respect. Two of the Bulgarians knew no German and feared not so much death and torture which they had faced at home but a sinister and unavailing end in an unmeaning environment. They fell into a kind of passively courageous stupor. Dimitrov alone hit back from the beginning, his whole mind concentrated on one thing only, how to turn the tables on the enemy.

In prison, Dimitrov heard of the death of his wife, "our unforgettable Lyuba," Serbian working girl, trade unionist, poetess, companion and fellow-fighter. But nothing could daunt

him. This above all was his passion—loyalty, loyalty to his own revolutionary life, loyalty to his communist convictions. Thoughts of death did not worry him so much as the need to win, to defeat his enemies, as Lenin had taught, with their own weapons, to turn the trial stage-managed by fascists into a mighty condemnation of fascism.

The Mephistophelian drama of the Reichstag trial dragged on, with Van der Lubbe, now a speechless lunatic, as its wretched Faust. Witnesses came from the strange borderland of crime and mental disease to testify against the four communists. Goering stamped into court, stamped more heavily as Dimitrov's shafts pierced the thick armour of his insolence, and stamped out of court raving thunder at the lone Bulgarian. Goebbels garnered all his craft and cunning and smiled smugly into court, primed for the fray, but in the battle of wits, the captive printer from the Balkans, handicapped by the court's hectoring hostility, won so decisively that the Nazi trickster took to his heels. And meanwhile Dimitrov's little letter to a sanatorium director in the North Caucasian hills, passed inadvertently by the jail censorship, had roused the Soviets and the conscience of the civilised world to the infamy which Hitler was seeking to perpetrate at Leipzig.

Dimitrov's classic speech in court is enough in itself to persuade the reader to cherish this biography. But the speech was no mere accidental feat. It symbolised the culmination of a life-time of revolutionary endeavour, it showed how he had really *Bolshevised* himself through merciless self-criticism and had grown into a front-rank international leader of the working class.

"For me as a communist," Dimitrov had said in his speech, "the highest law is the programme of the Communist International". And at the seventh congress of the Comintern in

1935, he was the principal architect of the thesis on the United Front which the congress adopted. For his monumental services to the revolutionary struggle against fascism, Dimitrov was elected to be the general secretary of the Comintern, a post which he retained till the dissolution of the organisation in May 1943.

It will be relevant here to discuss the reasons for the dissolution, especially because the book reprinted herein was published before that historic event. Dimitrov himself was one of the signatories to the resolution conveying to sections of the Comintern the proposal that the organisation, as the directing centre of the international working-class movement, be dissolved. This resolution had produced at one time a certain perturbation in the minds of some people who sensed in it a deviation from the communists' internationalism. Such misgivings have happily been almost entirely dispelled, but it will be useful to reiterate the reasons which impelled the step, and to recall in particular the lucid statement made by M. Stalin in this connection.

The dissolution of the Comintern, said Stalin, was proper and timely because "(a) it exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that 'Moscow' allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to 'Bolshevise' them. An end is now put to this lie.

"(b) It exposes the calumny of the adversaries of communism within the labour movement to the effect that communist parties in various countries are allegedly acting not in the interest of their people but on orders from outside. An end is now being put to this calumny too.

"(c) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries regardless of party or religious faith, into a single camp

of national liberation—for unfolding the struggle against fascism.

“(d) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting all freedom-loving peoples into a single international camp for the fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism, thus clearing the way to the future organisation of a companionship of nations based upon their equality.”

[Stalin's letter to Harold King, Reuter's Chief Moscow Correspondent, May 28, 1943.]

The historic role of the Communist International, organised in 1919 as a result of the political collapse of the overwhelming majority of the pre-1914 workers' parties, consisted in preserving the teachings of Marxism from vulgarisation and distortion by opportunists in the working-class movement, and in helping to unite in a number of countries the vanguard of the advanced workers into genuine working-class parties. Long before World War II broke out, the Communist International had exposed the true significance of the “Anti-Comintern” pact as a weapon for the preparation of war by the fascist Powers. But long before the war it had already become clear that with the increasing complications of the internal as well as the international relations of the various countries, any sort of international centre was bound to encounter insuperable obstacles in attempting the solution of problems facing the working-class movement of each particular country.

It was increasingly felt that the organisational form which corresponded to the initial period of the rebirth of the working-class movement after World War I, was being outgrown by the movement's development and the growing complexity of problems confronted by working-class parties in many countries.

The seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935 took serious note of the need for greater flexibility and independence of its

sections and instructed its executive committee "as a rule to avoid direct intervention in the internal organisational affairs of the communist parties." It was in pursuance of the directions of the seventh congress that the executive committee approved the decision of the communist party of the United States of America to leave the ranks of the International in November 1940.

Dimitrov and his colleagues pointed out in their statement that "communists have never advocated the preservation of organisational forms which have become obsolete," and recalled that Marx himself had no compunction about dissolving the First International which laid the basis for the development of workers' parties in Europe and America, once he realised it had fulfilled its historic task and its organisational shape no longer corresponded to the needs of the situation.

It was from these considerations and in view also of the fact that during the present war a number of sections had raised the question of the dissolution, that the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International placed its famous resolution for sanction by affiliated sections, which unanimously approved the decision.

No misgivings should therefore mar one's understanding of a step which was supremely necessary in the struggle to rid the world of fascism as an absolute pre-condition of freedom and social revolution. The Communist International has done its historic work and been wound up by the unanimous decision of the working class in all countries. No tinsel emotion should be permitted to warp our view of what an objective situation demands. The reader should bear this in mind as he goes through the life story of the great fighter who was for eight years the helmsman of the Communist International.

Calcutta
Oct. 4, 1944.

Hiren Mukerjee

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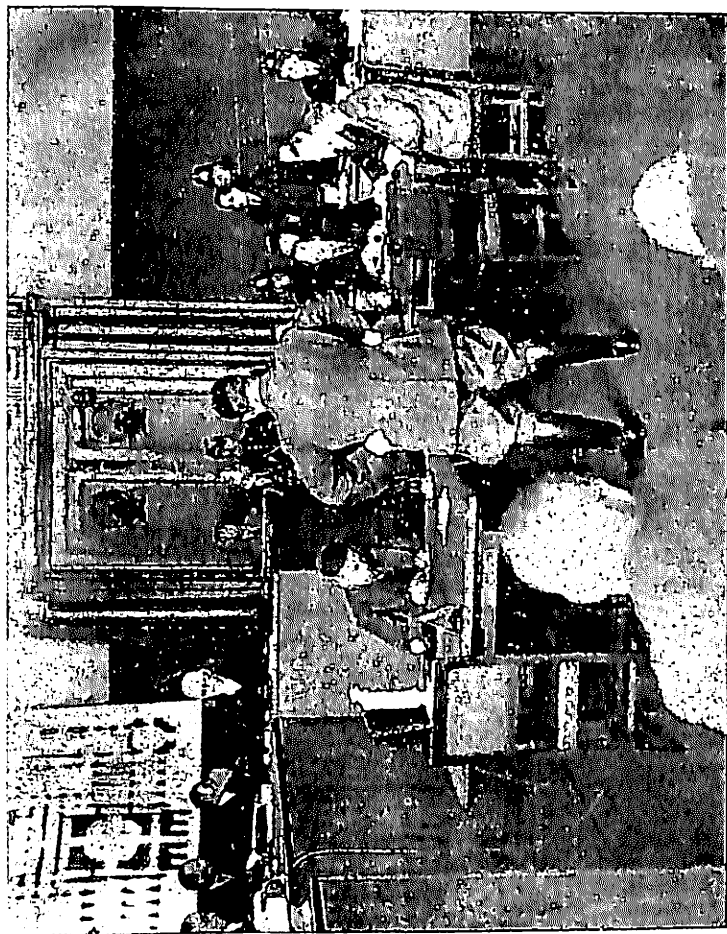
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GENERAL GORING

To Dimitrov :—"I am not afraid of you, you crook ! You belong to the gallows ! Wait until I get you outside the power of this Court !"



Sofia—Moscow

INTRODUCTION

THIS name, the name of Georgi Dimitrov, lives to-day in the hearts of millions. Dimitrov is a prominent worker of the communist International. A Bolshevik, he has been through the hard school of a proletarian revolutionary. As a talented son of the working class, he has taken his place in the front ranks of the international proletariat.

Dimitrov's name became especially dear to millions of people throughout the world after that titanic, victorious struggle which he waged against German fascism. Dimitrov's struggle against German fascism at the Leipzig trial is the continuation and further development of the whole revolutionary life and activity of this Bolshevik.

In Dimitrov are embodied the finest fighting qualities of those who are fighting for Communism throughout the world! Dimitrov and thousands like him have been brought forth by the epoch of proletarian revolution; they have been trained and hardened by the great world Party of Communism—the Communist International. Their unconquerable banner, their invincible weapon, is the doctrine of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin—the supreme experience of the Russian Bolsheviks, who conquered in October 1917 and who are successfully directing the building of socialism on one-sixth of the earth's surface.

Dimitrov won at Leipzig thanks to his personal courage and talents as a revolutionary for whom the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have become his life-cause. He won because of the mighty wave of proletarian solidarity which swept the world during the Leipzig trial, creating a united revolutionary front of the toilers, attracting the best of the

intelligentsia. This victory was crowned by the liberation of Dimitrov and his comrades, Popov and Tanev, because the U.S.S.R. came to their defense; they became citizens of the U.S.S.R. after their bourgeois fatherland, fascist Bulgaria, had renounced them. That is why we have a right to say that at Leipzig Communism triumphed over fascism.

We are proud of Dimitrov. And naturally every class-conscious proletarian wants to know more about him. The workers of the world are waiting impatiently for Dimitrov himself to tell the story of the Leipzig trial. The book which Dimitrov, despite sickness and fatigue, is now writing, will undoubtedly form the most valuable contribution to international revolutionary literature. In this work we shall make only a modest attempt, commensurate with our powers, to depict certain events in the life and work of Georgi Dimitrov, hoping in this way to give our readers a somewhat clearer picture of a great Bolshevik.

A FAMILY OF REVOLUTIONARIES

DIMITROV was born on June 18, 1882, in the mountainous little country of Bulgaria, not far from the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, in the town of Radomira.

Bulgaria is mainly agricultural. It has a population of six million inhabitants. The proletariat of Bulgaria grew up rapidly after the country's liberation from the Turkish yoke in 1877-78. There are now about 100,000 industrial workers in Bulgaria, with about 250,000 urban proletarians and about 3000,000 agricultural workers. They are for the most part scattered over the whole country, since there are no landlord estates and no great number of large farms in Bulgaria.

In this country the majority of the working class has now taken the side of its class revolutionary organizations and is

fighting under the slogans of the Bulgarian Communist Party—a party which is working under the most severe conditions of illegality. Communist slogans exercise great influence among the poor peasants and among the poorer middle-peasants. Communists lead strikes and demonstrations; there is profound unrest among the peasant masses, and now in the army. In the struggles of the worker and peasant masses of Bulgaria, the slogan of the Soviets, the slogan of creating a Soviet Bulgaria, is to be heard ever more-frequently, ever more persistently.

From this country, in the days of the framed Leipzig trial, came Dimitrov's mother, Paraskeva—first to Paris, thence to Berlin and to Leipzig.

Dimitrov's father died in 1912. A small handicraftsman and subsequently a worker, his character was one of extraordinary stanchness, firmness and independence, and he commanded universal respect among those who knew him. Thanks to the influence of his elder son, Georgi, who was also followed by the other children along the path of revolution, he became an adherent and in many respects an active helper of the Party. He also taught his wife to help the children in their revolutionary work. And so now, in the days of the Leipzig trial, the figure of this seventy-two year old woman, Paraskeva Dimitrova, appears before the world side by side with her eldest son, the undaunted proletarian revolutionary.

Thousands of proletarians saw her in Paris at crowded meetings, organized in defense of her son, saw her on the streets of Berlin and Leipzig, thrusting her way into the court, fighting for leave to see her son. Thousands saw her at the prison door waiting to see him. This small figure, wrapped in a black shawl, has remained engraved on the memory of all who saw her—with her unforgettable face upon which the sufferings of a mother and working woman, who has reared up a generation

of revolutionary fighters, have plowed deep furrows. She had come from far-off Bulgaria in order to help her son in any way she could—her son whose head was threatened by the axe of the fascist executioner.

This seventy-two year old woman hastened to see her son again after ten years' separation, hastened with the thought in her mind that this was her fourth son facing death.

Three had fallen in struggle. The first was Konstantin. He was secretary of a printers' trade union, a revolutionary worker. And without doubt it was for that reason that he was kept in the firing line during the Balkan War of 1913. He was killed, and his mother does not even know the place of his grave.

The second to die was Nikola. He went to Russia when the battles of the 1905 Revolution were still raging. A worker and revolutionary, he hastened to the country where the armed proletarians, led by the Bolsheviks, were rising against the landlord-capitalist monarchy. Here he joined the Social Democratic Party. In 1908 the tsarist Okhrana (secret police) seized him in an illegal printshop in Odessa. He was brought to trial and condemned to exile to Siberia for life. Here, far from his native country, among the Siberian snows, Nikola Dimitrov perished for the cause of the proletariat. This was on the very eve of the great year, 1917.

The third son, Todor, was tortured to death by the secret police of Sofia in 1925. He was arrested on the eve of the explosion in Sofia Cathedral. In 1924, with the Bulgarian Communist Party, he was driven "underground," forced to hide from the police and live illegally. The Bulgarian police had already been hunting for him for a long time. His mother can remember him now as though he were alive. He would come running in from the street, pull some "illegal material" out of his pocket and press it into his mother's hands whispering :

"Into my pocket!" Under her long apron, reaching down to the ground, his mother had made two pockets—one for him, the other for her younger daughter, the Young Communist League member, Lena. She never confused these two pockets. But on that fatal day when Todor was arrested on the Street, he did not succeed in getting to her, and she could not help him! The old woman's heart tightens at the memory.

From that day Todor disappeared. She kept asking the hangmen where he was—where, at least, was his grave. In those dreadful days she was dragged around from one police department to another. They demanded that she tell them where her younger daughter Lena was concealed. They threatened to raze her little house to the ground. But she boldly hurled her answer into the faces of her torturers: "You may do so, you may do everything, you may betray Bulgaria." The hangmen snarled at her, tried to stop her mouth, but she kept repeating: "Tell me—where is Todor? Why did you not bring him to trial? Why have you ruined so many young lives? Answer me that."

But they did not try him. Todor was tortured to death, in prison. After his death, the police began searching for Lena. With rage and anguish in her heart the mother firmly answered the police: "You won't find Lena, just as you didn't find Georgi. And if you do find her, she won't speak a word to you just as Todor didn't speak." And all the time her heart was full of anxiety. How could she be sure that Lena would be successful in getting across the Bulgarian frontier? But she did not know where she was or how she was faring.

She went with other women to the cemetery to look for her son's grave. And when the other mothers, wives, sisters and children of Communists and revolutionaries who had been tortured to death wept over the graves of their dear ones,

Paraskeva did not cry but comforted the others, serving by a model of stanchness and faith, that cause, for which her sons had laid down their lives.

And now she had come to Berlin, buoyed up with the hope of seeing her son again. "Trust me," she said, "I'll get my way. Although I'm only a country woman, although I'm seventy-two years old, I'm still stubborn enough. Tanev's mother and I went to the German consulate in Sofia with an application, asking them to admit us to Germany to the trial. The Bulgarian police seized us on the very threshold. They dragged us old women through the streets by the scruff of the neck. Maybe they wanted to do the Germans a service, or maybe they were afraid we might set the consulate on fire with our application. They put us in prison. Well, all Sofia was up in arms at once. 'Why must you insult old women?' was the cry. That's the only reason they released us two."

During these days old Paraskeva has had occasion to convince herself in every way how the proletariat struggles to save its best fighters. She participated in many crowded meetings at Paris. Her appearance everywhere caused a storm of enthusiasm. With her black steadfast eyes and her haggard face, looking as though it were hewn out of stone, Paraskeva Dimitrova looked down on the surging sea of workers' faces, and her faith in her son's salvation grew stronger within her.

"I am happy to be present at such a huge meeting", she told the workers. "In Bulgaria it is now ten years since the workers were deprived of the right to hold meetings like this. My son Georgi has given up thirty-five years of his life to the labour movement. He is not the sort of man to play the incendiary. Now he is in the clutches of the fascists. I call upon you to fight so as to free Dimitrov, his comrades and all workers."

Excited by the ovation she receives, she turns her glance towards her two daughters who are standing beside her.

The elder daughter, Magdalene, has left a son in Bulgaria. He is a League member and in prison. Yes, this is the fifth son of the old woman's family who is threatened with destruction at the hands of the bourgeoisie—her eighteen-year-old grandson. He is serving a jail sentence for carrying on Communist propaganda—for distributing leaflets about the Soviet Union.

But the younger daughter, Lena, is with her. Lena embodies her hopes for the salvation of her son and grandson. Has she not come now from the Soviet Union, where she made her way illegally in 1925, crossing the Bulgarian frontier on foot? She grew up in the land of the Soviets, in that great family of victorious workers and peasants who overthrew the power of the landlords and capitalists and are building socialism. Lena has grown up from a League member to a member of the Communist Party. The mother looks at her with pride; she is just as firm, just as dauntless as her sons. At the meetings and at home she listens to her clear, assured speech—the speech of a Communist. This speech of hers awakens the will to struggle and strengthens the faith in the invincibility of the proletariat, faith in the might of the proletarian state.

Lena has already been to London, to the sessions of the anti-fascist trial, organized by the international proletariat to expose the Leipzig frame-up, and she has also been in France, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland. Everywhere she disclosed the meaning and significance of the Leipzig trial at which her brother was being tried, everywhere she explained the aims and tasks of the Communists.

"The Communists," she said, "are opposed to individual terror; they are not incendiaries, they openly declare that they

call upon and prepare the workers for the armed mass uprising to overthrow capitalism. The Communists call upon the toilers to take the path of the Russian workers and peasants, who have attained victory and are building socialism, due solely to the able leadership of the Leninist-Stalinist Party of the Bolsheviks. It is only the Party of Lenin and Stalin which knows how to lead the workers to victory."

In Berlin, in the atmosphere of rabid terror created by the fascists around the trial, the mother of the revolutionary did not shrink. She gave a determined rebuff to the so-called fascist "counsels for the defense" who tried to use her as an instrument to break her son's courage. "For what was he given the gift of speech if not to say what he ought to?" she answered the fascist pack. At one of her meetings with her son in prison she contrived to whisper to him by stealth, without attracting the attention of the jailors, that the proletariat in all the countries was rising up to struggle for the liberation of him and his comrades. Driven away by the fascists from the doors of the prison where her son was confined after his acquittal, deprived of the aid of the interpreter, who was deported from Germany, she waited on till she finally received the news that her son and his comrades, Popov and Tanev, were already at liberty—in their proletarian fatherland. She also lived to see that day when it fell to her lot to be among the men and women workers, among the men and women collective farmers of the Soviet Union, to stand side by side with her son, who embodies in himself the pride and love not only of her but of the whole international proletariat as well.

But in the minds both of the son and of the mother the storm of welcome from millions of proletarians after his release and arrival in the land of the Soviet was accompanied by an inner grief of remembrance of one who for twenty-five years had been

Georgi Dimitrov's constant and closest companion in life and struggle—the remembrance of his dead wife.

Dimitrov's wife, Lyuba Ivoshevich, died in Moscow in 1933 after prolonged illness. The hard life of a revolutionary proletarian, years of incessant illegality and exile broke the health of this highly gifted woman. The final blow was the news of Georgi Dimitrov's arrest by the fascist hangmen in Germany.

Lyuba Ivoshevich, a worker in the needle industry from Belgrade, learned from her own experience, from the very earliest years of her life, the meaning of capitalist exploitation.

At an early age she joined the Social-Democratic movement of the Serbian workers, and subsequently, when the fight for bare existence and the persecutions of the bourgeoisie drove her to Bulgaria, she joined the Bulgarian revolutionary labor movement. The living personification of proletarian internationalism, she very quickly found a place in the leading ranks of those who were fighting for the organization of the Bulgarian workers in trade unions. Secretary of the Needle Workers' Trade Union, editor of the trade union paper, member of the editorial board of the women's newspaper of the Party of *Tesnyaks*,* and later of the Communist Party, she fulfilled a number of highly responsible functions entrusted to her by the Bulgarian Communist Party in Serbia. On the organization of the Serbian Communist Party, (now the C. P. of Yugoslavia), she attended the Party Congress in Serbia as a representative from the Bulgarian Communist Party. Her services are especially great in connection with the affiliation of the advanced detachment of the Serbian proletariat to the Communist International and the overcoming of centrism in the Serbian labor movement. She spent the last years of her life in the U.S.S.R. and became a member of the C.P.S.U.

* The revolutionary wing of Bulgarian Social Democracy.

Poet, journalist and organizer, active member of the Communist Party, she was well known to Bulgarian and Serbian workers. A working woman, she devoted especially great attention to the women workers, their organisation, their class education. The best wreath on her tomb is represented by the present revolutionary mass actions of the Bulgarian women workers in the textile and tobacco industry, the majority of whom are marching in the front ranks of the Bulgarian proletariat.

Her many-sided revolutionary activity was closely allied with the work of Dimitrov and she combined it with great care and solicitude for him during the time of his illegal work.

One cannot speak of the life and work of Georgi Dimitrov without mentioning the great part played by his wife, Lyuba Ivoshevich, his closest companion throughout twenty-five years of revolutionary struggle.

"I AM A SON OF THE BULGARIAN WORKING CLASS"

"I AM proud of the fact that I am a son of the Bulgarian working class," declared Georgi Dimitrov to the Leipzig trial.

Born of a working class family, Dimitrov joined the struggle of the working class at an early age, afterwards becoming one of its best leaders.

He has been through the stern school and training of a proletarian fighter.

In 1894 Georgi Dimitrov—a talented twelve-year-old boy with a consuming desire for knowledge—was forced to leave school to help his numerous family to earn their living. He entered life having passed through only two classes of a secondary school.

In order to have closer contact with books, Georgi went to work in a printshop, where he quickly learned typesetting.

At that time there was already a Social-Democratic Party in Bulgaria, created as a result of the persistent struggle between those who supported and those who opposed a party organization of the Bulgarian working class.

This was at the dawn of the Bulgarian labor movement. Many of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia believed that Bulgaria would avoid the path of capitalist development. This point of view gave rise to a lack of faith in the forces and even in the existence of the working class in the country. In the struggle against this standpoint the Social-Democratic Party of Bulgaria was born and grew up. At that time there were also some individual trade unions in existence in Bulgaria. The oldest was the printers' union in Sofia.

Young Dimitrov quickly joined a circle of revolutionary workers who aided the development of his class consciousness. He himself was drawn to them by a passionate sense of protest against an order of things which was founded on cruel exploitation and which deprived the worker of all chance to grow, study and develop. Yet Dimitrov himself tried to make good by self-education. Till late in the night his oil lamp burned in his small room.

The Bulgarian working youth learned from the heroic struggle for national liberation waged by the toilers of their country against five hundred years of Turkish oppression. The Social-Democratic Party, from the first days of its existence, told young Bulgarians, about the heroic fighters of the Russian revolutionary movement, about the bloody and self-sacrificing struggle of the Russian working class against the feudal-monarchist yoke. Agitation and propaganda of Marxism, in word and print, clearly interpreted the revolutionary traditions already alive in the country, and awakened the class consciousness of the Bulgarian workers, strengthening their struggle for their own organization.

Thus the revolutionary consciousness of young Dimitrov began to form since he was fifteen years old. In the ranks of the revolutionary labor movement Dimitrov grew up and received his training. Ability and knowledge, personal daring and dauntlessness, unbounded devotion to the cause of the working class quickly found for him a place among the organizers of the trade union movement of printing workers. At the age of sixteen Dimitrov was already an advanced activist in the printers' trade union in Sofia.

Here is one episode from Dimitrov's life at that time. The memory of this, many years later, was enough to enrage one of the most prominent representatives of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, the arch-reactionary Rodoslavov. When Dimitrov, as a representative of the Bulgarian proletariat, was mounting the speaker's tribune in the Bulgarian parliament, Rodoslavov shouted to him from his minister's chair: "I know you of old. It is you who at the age of sixteen had the impudence to correct my articles."

Smiling sarcastically in the face of the enraged prime minister, Dimitrov recalled this first outburst of his revolutionary protest. At that time the young typesetter Dimitrov was the only one who, when deciphering the minister's handwriting, expunged from his articles and speeches paragraphs in which the embittered reactionary slandered the workers for organizing a May Day celebration (1899).

The years 1899-1900. Eighteen-year-old Dimitrov is elected secretary of the printers' trade union. Dimitrov extends the sphere of his revolutionary activities. He sets about organizing a trade union confederation of printers throughout Bulgaria.

IN THE PARTY OF THE *TESNYAKS*

DIMITROV was already in the ranks of Social-Democracy and was active in the embittered struggle between its two wings

—the revisionist movement of the so-called *Shiroki* * headed by Sakazov, and the revolutionary Marxist movement of the so-called *Tesnyaks* headed by D. Blagoyev, the oldest leader of the Bulgarian working class, who also founded the first Social-Democratic workers' circles in Russia (the Blagoyev group in St. Petersburg, 1883). The Bulgarian *Tesnyaks*, in contradistinction to the *Shiroki*, waged a bitter struggle against the policy of class collaboration between the proletariat and bourgeoisie; they based themselves on the standpoint of the irreconcilable class struggle, stood for a centralized party of the working class with strict discipline. They were distinguished by unbounded devotion to the cause of the working class, and unshakable faith in its victory. The *Tesnyaks* formed one of the organizations of the Left, Marxist wing of the Second International prior to the war.

The *Tesnyaks*, as a Left Marxist tendency, felt the irresistible influence of the Russian revolutionary movement. They waged a bitter struggle against reformism in Bulgaria. Yet on some basic questions of the proletarian revolution (the peasant question, the question of power, of proletarian dictatorship, of party construction) the *Tesnyaks* took a non-Bolshevik stand. However, under the influence of the October Revolution, and of Lenin's great work, the *Tesnyak*,—the backbone of the Communist Party of Bulgaria which was taking shape—having been through the experiences of the September uprising of 1923, cleansed their ideology from all survivals of their Social-Democratic past and their party from alien elements, and passed over firmly and irrevocably to Bolshevism as the sole revolutionary party of Bulgaria.

In the bitter struggle waged on the eve of the split of 1903, Dimitrov was most active on the side of the *Tesnyaks*. After

* Literally: "The Broads."

the split of the Social-Democratic Party in 1903, he carried on great work against the opportunist leadership in the printers' trade union, organized the trade union opposition in it and subsequently created a class trade union of printers.

In 1904 young Dimitrov, having proved himself an extremely talented organizer and mass worker in the struggle against the Bulgarian revisionists and reformists, was promoted by the Party of the *Tesnyaks* to the post of secretary of the Confederation of Trade Unions which was formed at that time in Bulgaria. Under the influence of the party of *Tesnyaks* a split had been brought about in the Bulgarian trade union movement. From 1904 to 1923 Dimitrov remained the secretary of this confederation. He was also elected a member of the central committee of the party of *Tesnyaks* and subsequently of the central committee of the Communist Party, to which he has been re-elected on every occasion up to the present time.

From 1913 to 1923 Dimitrov was elected a member of the Bulgarian Parliament as a candidate of the Sofia organization of the Party and he was also the Party's representative in the Sofia Municipal Council and in the Sofia District Council. The many-sided activity made him a great speaker and journalist of the Bulgarian proletariat, a theoretician of the trade union movement.

Dimitrov could tell many interesting facts about the experience which he gained in the central committee, hand in hand with the oldest members of the Bulgarian *Tesnyaks*—D. Blagoyev and G. Kirkov—in the years 1905-1907.

This was above all a school of Marxist agitation, of the organization of the revolutionary trade union movement in Bulgaria. It was a school of struggle for winning over the workers from the influence of the Bulgarian reformists. It was a school of struggle for cleansing the ranks of the Party from petty-bourgeois groups, from intellectuals and

would-be intellectuals. This struggle was not waged from a Leninist position, but it nevertheless served as a weapon of the revolutionary labor movement of Bulgaria led by the Communist Party.

Dimitrov is known in Bulgaria to the workers in the towns and among the coal mines and stone quarries on the mountains; he is known to the peasants in the villages. Everywhere he awakened the class consciousness of the Bulgarian proletariat, roused it to struggle for its immediate demands, prepared it for revolutionary battles against the bourgeoisie.

In this work Dimitrov's characteristic traits as a revolutionary fighter were already becoming apparent—the ability to organize the masses and to lead them to victory, the ability to expose an opponent, an iron will in struggle against the enemy. In this respect he was a model for the advanced members of the Bulgarian working class; by his own example he taught them how to conduct themselves in the presence of the enemy. How strong was his influence over the workers may be judged from the fact that the latter not only learned from him but not a few of them even imitated him, copying his felicitous manner of speaking and debating. Outstanding abilities as an organizer, knowledge of the real needs and requirements of the masses and abilities to convert them into revolutionary slogans, tremendous energy, unbounded daring, extraordinary modesty and uncommon consideration towards comrades—these are the qualities which made Dimitrov one of the best loved leaders of the Bulgarian workers. These traits in his character were fully developed in the period of the upsurge of the labor movement in Bulgaria.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE REFORMISTS

THIS upsurge in Bulgaria, just as in other countries, developed under the mighty influence of the 1905 Revolution

in Russia and found its expression in the first large-scale strikes in Bulgaria.

In 1906 a wave of mass strikes swept over the whole country. Beginning with the strike of the railwaymen and the miners, the strike wave caught up all branches of production in the country. A special place in this movement was taken by the heroic struggle of the miners of the main coal area of Bulgaria, Pernik, in 1906. This was the first general mass strike of industrial proletariat in Bulgaria and it paved the way for the wide extension of the influence of the Party of *Tesnyaks* among the industrial proletariat. It was a striking manifestation of the class struggle in the country. It split the whole country into two camps—the bourgeois state, the masters of the coal basin, against the workers and peasant masses.

This was an epic struggle lasting thirty-five days. It was organized and led by Dimitrov. In preparing for and conducting this struggle he was able to mobilize all the forces of the Sofia party organization, including about fifty propagandists and agitators—workers, students and pupils. During the strike special leaflets and manifestos were published, and agitation, both in work and print, was conducted on a broad scale.

Many organizers of the mass battles of the proletariat even at the present day can and must learn lessons from the example afforded by the preparation, organization and conduct of this strike.

The next important stage of the strike struggle of the Bulgarian workers, which was rising to ever greater heights in this period, was the strike of the textile workers of Slivna (1908), the stubborn strike struggle, lasting three months, in the match industry at Kostentse (1909), the miners' strike, at Plakalnitsa (1910); the strike of the tobacco workers at Plovdiva, and

finally the general strike of the printers in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, in 1913. It was during this strike that the question first arose in Bulgaria of forming a united front with the Bulgarian reformists, the so-called "broad socialists." The latter, by rejecting a militant program of action, disrupted the united front of the workers.

The strikes were conducted under the influence of the Party of *Tesnyaks* and the class trade unions led by them. The personal services of Dimitrov in developing this movement were exceptionally great. As secretary of the Confederation of Trade Unions, he visited all the areas of struggle in person. He constantly corresponded with every strike committee, many of which comprised as many as seventy persons, never letting the leadership of the movement out of his hands for an instant. In this way, during the years 1908-12, he was able to organize about six hundred and eighty strikes in various branches of industry. Under his direct influence and leadership the worker cadres of the trade union movement in Bulgaria grew up and were trained. Under his leadership the revolutionary trade unions, were gradually winning over the positions from the reformist trade unions.

As a result of the first successes of the revolutionary trade union movement, Dimitrov was able to form in 1907 and 1908 centralized industrial trade unions in Bulgaria. He was the author of the statutes and program of action of the centralized trade unions at that time.

This work of Dimitrov, in carrying out the line of the Party of *Tesnyaks* in the trade union movement, drew upon him the furious hatred of the Bulgarian reformists. The old leader of the Bulgarian social-reformists, Yanko Sakazov, burst out indignantly at the congress when addressing his trade union bureaucrats :

"How can our organizations grow if, whenever a strike is declared anywhere, Dimitrov inevitably turns up there?"

The enemies of the revolutionary labor movement have several times tried to settle accounts with Dimitrov by shooting at him from ambush.

The year 1910. The Plakalnitsa Mine, high up in the Balkan mountains. Dimitrov makes a speech at a meeting of workers who have gone on strike and only just left the mines. During his speech a bullet pierces the window and flies over his head. Three of the audience immediately dash out, throw themselves upon the man who fired, and overpower him. He turns out to be the leader of the local reformists. Dimitrov calmly continues his speech, utterly exposing the whole treacherous role of the reformists—these miserable hirelings of capitalism who are planning to stab the working class in the back.

Dimitrov's first trial and imprisonment are connected with his activity in exposing the Bulgarian reformists. In the foreword to his pamphlet, *The Development of the Trade Union Movement*, he gave the reformists their deserts and called one of their leaders a strike breaker. The latter prosecuted Dimitrov for libel. The bourgeois court naturally took the side of the reformist and demanded that Dimitrov should withdraw his words. Dimitrov, however, not only did not do this, but made use of the court in order fully to expose the reformists. The young leader of the Bulgarian trade union movement was shut up in the old prison, dating back to the times of Turkish rule, known as "The Black Minaret." Dimitrov filled his days of imprisonment with intensive journalistic activity. From prison he continued to lead the revolutionary struggle, making use of all links with the outside world for this purpose.

Dimitrov also carried the struggle against the Bulgarian reformists on to the international arena. The Second and

Amsterdam Internationals before the war had reason to know that vigorous and impetuous struggle which was waged against the treacherous policy and work of the reformist leaders by the young proletarian revolutionary who headed the Confederation of Trade Unions in Bulgaria.

At international plenums and congresses the Bulgarian delegates demanded the expulsion of the Bulgarian reformists from the International (the bureau of the Amsterdam International, 1904; Copenhagen 1910; Basel, 1912). While realizing the principle of an indissoluble organizational link between the trade unions and the party in the trade union movement in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian *Tesnyaks* also fought for the recognition of this principle on an international scale. In 1909 they opposed Plekhanov on this question, despite the fact that the latter commanded tremendous authority in the Bulgarian labor movement.

No less determinedly did they oppose all envoys of international Menshevism who visited Bulgaria with the aim of inducing the "headstrong splitters" to unite with the Bulgarian reformists. In 1910 Trotsky was an envoy of this kind and in 1913—Rakovsky. Both of them were forced to leave the field of battle in derision and defeat. Dimitrov, together with the other leaders of the *Tesnyaks*, waged a fierce struggle against the high-flown phrases of the representatives of that opportunism which was already rife at that time in the ranks of the Second International. In 1913 the Bureau of the Amsterdam International convened a special conference at Budapest on the Bulgarian question. At this conference Dimitrov vigorously supported the line of the party on the trade union question and fiercely opposed the representative of Bulgarian reformism, Yanko Sakazov. The Bureau of the Amsterdam International was obliged to send an old and tried trade union bureaucrat, Legien,

to Bulgaria in order to induce the trade unions led by the central committee of the party of the *Tesnyaks*, to unite with the reformists on the spot.

Dimitrov's brilliant speech, in which he opposed the compromising arguments of the old social traitor, Legien, the head of the German trade unions, with the revolutionary thesis—for unity of the trade unions, but on the basis of an irreconcilable class struggle—finally confirmed the trade union masses in the position which they had occupied and roused them to give a decisive rebuff to the advances of international trade union bureaucracy.

This was in the summer of 1914. Soon after, the imperialist war broke out. On August 4, the Second International committed its act of treachery. The Bulgarian *Tesnyaks* roused the indignation of the working masses against this unheard-of betrayal, which was splitting the ranks of the international proletariat, against the social-chauvinists who were leading the proletariat to the slaughter in all countries in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

THE WAR AND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

DIMITROV was one of the finest propagandists of the line of the Party for the International education of the Bulgarian working class. In this respect, both before and after the war, he carried on a tremendous work through the trade unions which were under his leadership. There was not one event in the international labor movement, there was not one great strike, which did not find its echo in his work among the broadest working masses of Bulgaria. At the time of the Leipzig trial the Swedish trade unions published some letters of Dimitrov, found in the trade union archives, regarding the organization of material aid from Bulgaria for Swedish strikers. Without

doubt, Sweden was not the only country with whose labor movement Dimitrov tried to establish connections for the Bulgarian working class. In particular, Dimitrov did much work with a view to linking the struggle of the Bulgarian proletariat with the American labor movement through the medium of the Bulgarian and Macedonian emigrant in America.

As secretary of the Confederation of Trade Unions in Bulgaria, Dimitrov devoted special attention to the question of affiliating the proletarian masses to the movement of the Balkan Socialist (afterwards Communist) Federation. As early as 1912 Dimitrov was sent by the Party of *Tesnyaks* to attend the congress of the Rumanian Social-Democratic Party. His task was to unite the efforts of the Bulgarian and Rumanian proletariat for common struggle against the Balkan War of 1912, for which preparations were being made. The Rumanian police arrested and deported the daring revolutionary, who had tried to unite the forces of the Balkan proletariat for the struggle against war.

In the summer of 1915, when Bulgaria had not yet been drawn into the imperialist war, Dimitrov again went to Rumania to attend the conference of the Balkan Socialist Federation, which had been convened to draw up a program of action of the Left Social-Democrats in the struggle against the imperialist war. This time the Rumanian police expelled him from the country with a special decree of the Council of Ministers forbidding him ever to enter again.

Bulgaria did not enter the imperialist war until September 1915. The Party of the *Tesnyaks* fought courageously against the war, exposing "their own" bourgeoisie who were involving the Bulgarian masses in a bloody massacre. But the stand taken by the Party was not a consistently revolutionary, Bolshevik stand. The slogan of converting the imperialist war into a civil war was

not adopted by the party. And for this reason much of the party's work in undermining the *morale* of the army did not produce a revolutionary effect; for this reason the party did not head the Vladaya uprising in 1918—an uprising which voiced the discontent of the war-weary worker and peasant masses clad in soldiers' uniforms.

The war found Dimitrov a member of the Bulgarian parliament representing the Party of *Tesnyaks*. He was thus the first worker to enter parliament, not only in Bulgaria but in all southwestern Europe.

The thirty-year-old representative of the working class distinguished himself in the parliamentary group of *Tesnyaks*, by his energetic and biting speeches, by his ability to make full use of the parliamentary tribune in order to explain the political line and slogans of his party, in order to issue calls for struggle. His fierce attacks against the representatives of the bourgeois parties in parliament served in the majority of cases as the beginning of those fierce combats of the whole parliamentary group *Tesnyaks*, against all other parliamentary deputies—combats which roused the whole working class of Bulgaria and made Dimitrov the object of extraordinary popularity among the workers and of hatred among the bourgeoisie. We must note especially Dimitrov's courageous speeches against imperialist war and against Bulgaria's participation in this war, in particular his exposure of the schemes of militarist cliques, his defense of war prisoners. It was this anti-war struggle which eventually brought Dimitrov to prison.

As a member of parliament, Dimitrov was able to obtain leave to visit the war zone in Macedonia during the war on the pretext of examining the situation of the tobacco workers in Ksanti-Drama. This was after October 1917. The commanders at the front were warned of his coming in advance. But his revolutionary comrades at the front also learned of it through

the *Tesnyaks* who were working in the liaison service. They took steps to put the spies off the track and to utilize Dimitrov's visit in order to obtain information on the international situation and the directives of the central committee too. This was made possible to a large extent thanks to the adroitness of Dimitrov himself. He contrived to send the police spies who were following at his heels on a false track and penetrated unnoticed into the front line where he conducted an illegal party conference. In burning, vivid words, Dimitrov explained the great importance of the victory of the revolution in Russia, the importance of the slogan of Soviets which had been put into effect in the Russian Revolution. He was able to form an organization of tobacco workers in the war zone and to carry out demonstrations of these workers at Ksanti, and as a result an illegal workers' club was opened in Drama.

However, he did not make this journey with impunity. Soon after he was arrested. This was the pretext for his arrest: On one of his journeys during the war, Dimitrov found himself in a railway compartment with a Bulgarian general. A soldier who had been wounded and was returning to the front after convalescence entered the compartment. The general demanded that the soldier should immediately get out. Dimitrov took the soldier's part. A hot dispute arose between him and the general. As a result, for taking the part of a wounded soldier, Dimitrov was tried on the charge of inciting soldiers to disobey orders. Dimitrov was condemned to three years' imprisonment. He used the term of his imprisonment in order to increase his theoretical knowledge and to study German. Soon the whole country was swept by a campaign for the release of Dimitrov and of all imprisoned soldiers and revolutionaries. Under the unabating pressure of the revolutionary masses, the government was obliged to retreat. Early in 1918 an

amnesty for political prisoners was declared. Dimitrov left prison after having been confined for a year and a half.

After his release Dimitrov again devoted himself to intense revolutionary activity. Despite the fact that the country was under a state of siege, he organized and conducted a meeting among the miners of Pernik. Immediately after the meeting he was arrested. The news of his arrest spread quickly in Sofia. The party organization decided to meet the arrested Dimitrov at the station and there to demand from the authorities his immediate release. A great workers' demonstration set out for the railway station.

At that time the city was in a state of siege and was under the control of victorious French and English troops. At a late hour the train with the arrested Dimitrov on it pulled into the station. Dimitrov was led out under escort, but the mass of workers surrounded him in a dense ring, pressed forward singing revolutionary songs and crying: "Release Dimitrov!" The demonstration, with the prisoner at its head, passed through the main streets of the town, growing ever larger and causing an enthusiastic ovation among the inhabitants. The French and English soldiers, hearing the strains of the International, halted in astonishment and asked the demonstrators what was the matter. Hearing that the prisoner was a Bolshevik, they answered with shouts of "Long Live the Soviets" and joined the demonstration. At that time words "Bolshevik" and "Soviets" were already known to the whole world.

The year 1919. Although the Vladaya uprising, which broke out under the direct influence of the October Revolution, was suppressed, nevertheless a stormy upsurge of the revolutionary labor movement was growing in the country. It found its

expression in mass demonstrations, in bloody clashes with the police and the troops. The demonstration for Dimitrov's release was the first mass demonstration which ushered in an era of mass street actions of the Bulgarian proletariat under the leadership of the party. This first determined mass demonstration of the Sofia proletariat resulted in Dimitrov's instant release. The demonstration terminated with a meeting in the party club at which the beloved leader of the Sofia proletariat, Georgi Dimitrov, just released from arrest, appeared and spoke.

IN THE RANKS OF THE COMINTERN

IN the same year 1919 the Party of *Tesnyaks* joined the ranks of the Communist International, changing their name to the Bulgarian Communist Party (*Tesnyaks*). A new stage of development began for the Bulgarian labor movement. Its vanguard had joined the ranks of the Comintern but it still retained many survivals of Social-Democratic ideology. Its task was to bolshevize itself. During this period it still committed some grave errors. But under the leadership of the Comintern, the Bulgarian Communist Party unswervingly pursued the path of bolshevization.

Under the leadership of the Comintern, the Party was also able to make use of the experience it had gained in the field of mass work. Beginning with 1919, mass actions of the proletariat headed by the Communist Party followed thick and fast. The soul of these mass actions in Sofia was Dimitrov. During this year he was frequently obliged to hide to avoid arrest. Nevertheless the ever broadening mass movement more than once enabled him to return to legal work.

At the end of 1919 we again find Dimitrov in Pernik. A strike is organized under his leadership, despite the difficult

conditions created by the state of siege. The forces of reaction employ armed force in their efforts to break up the meeting at which Dimitrov is speaking. A battle breaks out between the strikers and the reenforced detachments of mounted and foot police. One officer is killed, there are mass arrests. But the workers defend Dimitrov and succeed in conveying him to Sofia in secret. Acting on the instruction of the Central Committee, Dimitrov after this organized the defense of several miners brought before the courtmartial. The ably organized defense and the firm bearing of the accused rescued them from the court-martial.

Dimitrov, who at that time headed the local committee of the Party, steadfastly directed the mass actions of the Sofia workers. The tactics employed consisted of flying meetings, moving from one spot to another, from one district to another, lasting the whole day and involving constant clashes with the police. In those days the Communist Party at the head of the working masses was fighting for amnesty for all prisoners condemned for offenses at the front, demanded that those responsible for the war brought before a people's court, fought against the Versailles Treaty, against the high cost of living and bad housing conditions. For days Dimitrov constantly spoke at meeting after meeting.

After one of his speeches at an open air meeting the first barricades were put up in Sofia and the attack of the cavalry was repulsed.

At that time there was no branch of revolutionary work in which the guiding influence of Dimitrov did not make itself felt. The Party at that time came forward in defense of the interests and demands of all sections of the urban poor. Three workers were killed in a street demonstration against bad housing conditions. The funeral of these workers was converted into a mighty

demonstration with the Central Committee of the Party at its head. Dimitrov marched in the front ranks, leading the advanced detachments, who had successfully shown the way to the other demonstrators, in to a hand-to-hand battle with the police.

Not only the Sofia workers but the workers of all Bulgaria know the admirable stanchness and self-sacrifice of Dimitrov, his firmness in face of the furious attacks of the police.

In the same year, 1919, Dimitrov made frequent visits to all parts of the country. Here is an episode from one journey made by him in northern Bulgaria : at a time when political relations are highly strained, Dimitrov speaks at a meeting which has been convened in defiance of the police. The hall is not large enough to hold all those who want to hear Dimitrov—the representative of the Communist Party. The audience is in high excitement and listens to his speech with enthusiasm. His words are frequently interrupted by loud applause. Suddenly the police break into the hall. Dimitrov is the first to notice them. Preserving perfect calm, he continues his speech. His voice is drowned by the shouts of the police : "That's enough, Dimitrov !" Dimitrov continues. All eyes are riveted on him, the listeners follow each one of his movements. Nobody stirs. The police with difficulty make their way to the windows of the hall and the police officer springs onto the nearest bench. Dimitrov does not interrupt his speech. He infects the workers with his own composure. The officer shouts : "Dimitrov ! stop speaking, or I'll shoot !" A group of workers calmly and firmly surround Dimitrov. They are ready for anything. The officer draws out his revolver and threateningly points it in the direction of the speaker. Dimitrov concludes his speech with a call to struggle for the slogans of the Party. His last words are drowned in revolver shots. Instantly a fierce struggle commences, ending

in the flight of the police from the hall. Guarded by workers, Dimitrov takes the train and leaves for Sofia.

At the end of 1919 a political demonstration was conducted under the leadership of the Communist Party with demands for bread, coal, lodgings and clothes for the destitute masses of the people, coupled with the demand for the discontinuation of the help given to the Russian white guards, who were enjoying the special patronage and support of the Bulgarian government. When on the day following the demonstration (December 24, 1919) the government answered by dismissing the railwaymen and postal workers who had taken active part in it, the Bulgarian transport workers declared a general stike. They were supported by a sympathetic strike of the coal miners of Pernik. The strike lasted more than 50 days. It was led by the Communists, but they did not succeed in converting this strike into a nation-wide movement. And meanwhile the Bulgarian reformists, who still enjoyed considerable influence among the railway and postal workers, betrayed the strike.

An unheard-of reign of terror ensued in the country. The Communist fraction in Parliament was deprived of parliamentary immunity. A number of members of the Central Committee and members of Parliament were compelled to hide from the police. The latter raised an especial hue and cry for Dimitrov. This was Dimitrov's first more or less protracted experience of illegality. Despite these conditions, Dimitrov did not cease to lead the movement.

DIMITROV'S ARREST IN RUMANIA AND CHICHERIN'S NOTE

The year 1920. The delegation of the Bulgarian Communist Party is making its way to the Second Congress of the Comintern. Among the delegates are Georgi Dimitrov, Kolarov,

Kabakcheyev and others. No chance of going legally. The illegal way is across the Black Sea. On sailing boats, risking their lives, the delegation sets out for the land of Soviets. But not all of them are able to reach the Congress,

A storm drives the boat containing Dimitrov and Kolarov onto the Rumanian shore. Near Constancia they are seized by the Rumanian frontier guards and handed over to the *Siguranza* (secret police). There follow hard days of imprisonment for the two revolutionaries, who are burning to be at the Congress of the Comintern, where Lenin is speaking, where the paths of development and the victories of the proletarian Revolution are being mapped out. Besides this, the Rumanian *Siguranza* frames up a case against them on a charge of espionage. The *Siguranza* threatens Dimitrov with especially ferocious punishment, reminding him of the fact that the Rumanian Council of Ministers forbade him to enter the country as early as 1915.

The stormy indignation of the Bulgarian workers against the arrest of their leaders, the delegates to the Comintern Congress, breaks out into a mighty campaign. This campaign for the release of the Bulgarian Communists takes on great dimensions throughout all the Balkan countries.

The decisive factor in this campaign of proletarian solidarity was the vigorous action of the Soviet Government. Comrade Chicherin, People's Commissar For Foreign Affairs, sent a note to the Rumanian Government on July 17, 1920, demanding the release of the two Bulgarian delegates to the Second Congress of the Comintern, which was taking place on the territory of the Soviet State. Within three days Dimitrov and Kolarov were released.

Fourteen years later, in 1934, international proletarian solidarity headed by the vigorous action of the Soviet

proletariat, once again saved Dimitrov from the clutches of the class enemy.

Dimitrov took direct part in the work of the Third Congress of the Comintern (1921) and was elected a member of the executive Committee of the Comintern. At that time he also participated in the organization of the Profintern (Red Trade Union International) in Moscow and was elected a member of the Central Council of the Profintern. From this moment Dimitrov's revolutionary activity extended not only to Bulgaria, but to the international arena as well.

FIGHTING UNDERGROUND

AFTER the war Dimitrov was frequently compelled to "go underground," to hide from the police and live in illegality. But he knew how to combine methods of illegal work with legal forms of struggle. He was able to arrange sudden sorties from his underground existence, making use of every opportunity to carry on agitation and propaganda for the demands and slogans of the Communist Party. An especially indelible impression has been left on the minds of the Bulgarian workers by his speech in the Sofia Municipal Council in 1921.

At that time the police were searching feverishly for him, and he was living in illegality. The question of the budget was being discussed in the Municipal Council, in connection with which it was necessary to give an exposition of the Party's Municipal program. The reformists, who were conducting a rabid campaign against Dimitrov, began to spread among the workers provocative rumors to the effect that Dimitrov was hiding, that it was only in words that he could put forward the Party's Municipal program. With the consent of the Sofia Party organization, Dimitrov decided to appear and speak in the Municipal Council. His appearance there caused an uproar

among the Municipal Councilmen of all shades. A storm of indignation arose in the camp of the bourgeoisie and the order was issued for his instant arrest. But it turned out that all the telephone connections of the Municipal Council had been cut and the doors were occupied by a workers' guard, which contrived in the general scrimmage to get Dimitrov out of the building.

After this episode, the whole bourgeois press derided the police for being unable to get hold of Dimitrov, despite the fact that all its forces were mobilized for this purpose. In poking fun at the police, the press wrote of the "red cap of invisibility," which concealed Dimitrov from his pursuers.

Dimitrov also carried on active work among the national minorities, particularly among the Macedonians. The Bulgarian bourgeoisie, which was verging towards fascism, finally converted the Macedonian nationalist terrorist organization into a military-fascist organization and its members into the hangmen of the workers and peasants. These hirelings of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie made a trial sortie on the eve of the *coup d'etat* of 1923 in order to ascertain the strength of the enemy; they not only established their rule by terrorist means in the Bulgarian Party of Macedonia, but even trespassed beyond its boundaries and in 1922 occupied the town of Kustendil on the territory of Bulgaria proper.

As a result of this experience, the Communist Party was obliged to take note of the incorrect position which it had taken in regard to the Macedonians and to formulate a new line of policy on the national question. Both in formulating and in carrying out the new line, much of the work fell to Dimitrov's lot. At the first mass meeting of the Macedonians of Sofia, convened by the Communists, Dimitrov made a speech

explaining the position of the Communist Party on the Macedonian question. In his speech he exposed the Macedonian autonomists and terrorists who were in fact a weapon in the hands of Bulgarian imperialism and were used by it for the struggle against the national liberation movement of the Macedonian people. And this fact was an example of Dimitrov's revolutionary courage, for all Sofia knew that the autonomists answered such speeches with the death sentence or with a bullet in the back. In addition to this, the Party organizations launched a great movement in the form of demonstrations and meetings. These mass actions were connected with the Party's struggle for a mass rebuff to the offensive of fascism.

At the same time Dimitrov carried on great work in connection with the parliamentary election campaign.

He also took active part in the Party's struggle to organize and carry through mass actions of the proletariat against the white guard bands of Wrangel in Bulgaria, which were subsidized by the Bulgarian bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie placed full reliance upon these bands in preparing for the fascist *coup d'état*. The Bulgarian Communist Party demanded that they be dissolved and expelled from the country.

Dimitrov likewise found time to devote his attention to the work of the illegal study circles in the army. He would often visit the soldiers in disguise in order to conduct their studies with them.

THE UPRISING OF 1923

THE year 1923 is the most important year in the history of the labor movement of Bulgaria. The months of June and September of this year taught serious lessons to the Bulgarian proletariat and its vanguard, the Communist Party.

On June 9, 1923, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie effected a military *coup d'etat*. The Government of Stambolisky, the leader of the so-called Peasant Union, was overthrown. This government represented the interests of the kulaĸ section of the peasantry.

The demagogic, halfway measures of the Stambolisky government could not of course solve any of the problems which were created by the terrible destitution, poverty and pauperization of the masses, ruined by war and crisis.

The influence of the Bulgarian Communist Party was growing and ever broader masses of the toilers were rallying around it. The forces of revolution were maturing in the country.

Under the threat of the maturing revolution, the bourgeoisie resorted to a fascist *coup d'etat*. It mobilized all the forces of counter-revolution—the officers who were under the patronage of the Bulgarian king, the nationalist terrorist organization of the Macedonians, and Bulgarian Social-Democracy, which at that time revealed its true character to the Bulgarian and the world proletariat, and took direct part in the military *coup d'etat*. The imperialist powers supported this *coup d'etat*.

The petty bourgeoisie in the countryside were rising in defense of their government and their party, the Peasant Union. The working class was waiting for the call of the Communist Party. In some places the local organizations of the Communist Party were already heading the first movement of the proletariat, which was striving to take up arms and to lead the insurgent peasant masses.

But the Central Committee of the Communist Party, including Dimitrov, let slip this supreme historical moment. At a time when the bourgeoisie had declared civil war, they took up a position of "neutrality." This was a crass

opportunist mistake. In an open letter to the members of the Bulgarian Communist Party the Comintern at that time revealed the significance of this mistake.

The Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party fully acknowledged the correctness of the Comintern's instructions. Dimitrov himself frequently remarked on subsequent occasions that there were two mistakes he could never forgive himself for : first the fact that the *Tesnyaks* in 1918 did not understand that they were not yet a Bolshevik Party and second, the mistake of June 9, 1923.

The Communist Party paid dearly for its error. Having broken up the Peasant Union, the bourgeoisie proceeded to deal a severe blow at the Communist Party. Cruel repressions were meted out to the insurgents. Thousands of peasants, workers and intellectuals were killed. The bloody fascist regime of *Zankov* was established in the country. But the revolution was not crushed. The broadest masses of the people were filled with an all-consuming hatred. An uprising was maturing.

In these days of June and July 1923 the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party were subjected to cruel persecution. And the Bulgarian police and fascist bands hunted with especial fury for Dimitrov. While living illegally, Dimitrov was already pursuing a line aimed at an uprising, and wrote article after article calling upon the workers to form a united front of struggle.

In September 1923 a majority of the Central Committee of the Communist Party put forward the slogan of an armed uprising. The most ardent upholder and executor of this decision was Dimitrov.

On September 23, under the leadership of the Communist Party, an uprising of the Bulgarian workers and peasants

broke out—an uprising against fascism and for a workers' and peasants' government. Dimitrov played an active and leading part in this uprising as plenipotentiary of the Central committee of the Communist Party of Bulgaria. In accordance with a decision of the Central Committee, he, together with Kolarov, left Sofia illegally, to take over the leadership of the armed uprising in the neighboring north-western outskirts of Bulgaria. Treachery, which caused the collapse of the revolutionary committee of Sofia, almost prevented them from taking part in the leadership of the uprising. Despite all the efforts to find them, they were not seized during the searches made by the police in the city. It seems a miracle, too, that they were not held up on the journey. On the way they were forced more than once to hide from their pursuers. Once they were compelled to leave their automobile and proceed on foot. Another time they sprang out of a carriage on the way and went off to the mountains on foot to conceal themselves. Only the vigilance and wariness of these two experienced revolutionaries saved them from the pursuers. With great difficulty they at length succeeded in making their way to the center of the uprising.

Here Dimitrov set about organizing revolutionary war committees in the places involved in the uprising. These were days and nights of intense and furious work, passed without sleep, without rest, in the firing line, in untiring struggle for every position in battle, for supplies of arms, for reinforcements.

After the uprising had been crushed, he, together with a group of a thousand fighters with arms in their hands, retreated step by step to the Yugoslavian frontier.

Dimitrov himself sums up as follows these stern days of armed struggle.

"I am proud of the heroic uprising.

"I only regret that at that time my Party and I were not yet *genuinely Bolshevik*. For this reason we were unable to successfully organize and carry through this historic popular uprising with the proletariat at the head.

"Our non-Bolshevik organization, policy and tactics, the absence of revolutionary experience and, in particular, our opportunist, that is to say, neutral position of June 9 at the time of the military-fascist *coup d'etat* considerably aided the Bulgarian bosses and murderers of the people, the usurpers of the state power, in suppressing the uprising of the masses.

"However, the Party learned a bloody lesson from this and made use of it in the further struggle for liberation of the Bulgarian workers and peasants. *In order to uproot Communism*, the fascist government bands immediately after the uprising and during the two ensuing years savagely killed more than twenty thousand workers, peasants and intellectuals. My brother was also killed in a police prison. And despite this, Communism in Bulgaria has incomparably deeper and stronger roots at the present time than in 1923. This should be a good warning to all rabid uprooters of Communism in other countries, for all kinds of present-day Don Quixotes." (From Dimitrov's evidence at the Leipzig trial.)

EMIGRATION

IN Yugoslavia Dimitrov and his companions-in-arms of the September uprising were admitted first as political prisoners, subsequently as political emigrants.

From this moment Dimitrov began a life of intensive work in emigration. The years 1923-34—more than a decade—are filled with feverish many-sided activity in the interests of the world proletarian revolution.

During these ten years the world revolutionary movement has traversed a tremendous path. This path leads from the great

class battles for power in the first post-war period, ending in 1923 with the defeat of the Hamburg uprising in Germany and of the September uprising in Bulgaria, to our own day when, in Stalin's words, "the idea of storming the citadel of capitalism is maturing in the minds of the masses," when fierce battles are breaking out afresh for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The battles of 1923 were the concluding battles of the first post-war period.

As a result of the treachery of the Second International and the weakness of the Communist parties, still young at that time, this struggle ended in the victory of the bourgeoisie.

After the war the parties of the Second International betrayed the proletarian revolution which broke out all over Europe in 1918-19—in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, and in other countries. Promising the working class to lead it to socialism by a "bloodless," democratic path, they disarmed the workers and forcibly suppressed their revolutionary struggle. With the aid of the Social-Democratic parties, the bourgeoisie crushed the Soviet republics in Hungary and Bavaria. With their aid the international imperialists organized intervention in the land of proletarian dictatorship—Soviet Russia. If Social-Democracy had not disarmed and betrayed the proletarian revolution in 1918, the world would bear a different appearance to-day.

Only in Russia did the proletarian dictatorship, set up in 1917, prove invincible, thanks to the correct leadership of the Leninist Party. After 1923 a period began in which capitalism succeeded in consolidating its position for the time being at the expense of the vital interests of the working class. And in this it received the greatest support from international Social-Democracy.

However, the imperialists did not succeed in crushing the Land of the Soviets—the first workers' state, brought into

being by the October Revolution in Russia. The proletarian revolution gave a mighty rebuff to the interventionists. Nor did they succeed in coming to an agreement in regard to a new military incursion against the U.S.S.R. The Soviet power, established on one-sixth of the earth's surface, was growing stronger every day.

The stabilization of the Soviet power insured a further rapid economic advance and growth of socialism in the U.S.S.R. Where-as capitalist stabilization, in proportion to its development, revealed ever more clearly its temporary and unstable character.

During these years the Communist International, the sole leader of the class battles of the proletariat, waged a persistent struggle for the bolshevization of the Communist Parties. The Comintern set all the Communist Parties the basic task of establishing firmer connections with the masses, of linking up with the trade unions, of carrying of pains-taking work from day to day for the winning over of the masses, above all in the trade unions, in the mills and factories, among the unemployed, among agricultural workers. This demanded that each Communist party should master the Leninist Stalinist teachings, in order to solve correctly all the problems of the labor movement in its own country. This demanded of the Communist Parties a persistent struggle to cleanse their ranks of opportunists and above all of the agents of Social-Democracy.

At that time the Comintern had to wage a stubborn and resolute struggle against Trotskyism. Trotskyism reflected the counter-revolutionary vacillations of the petty-bourgeoisie; it expressed lack of faith in the forces of the proletariat, denied the Leninist-Stalinist teaching of the possibility of building socialism in one country.

Dimitrov's work during these years consisted in helping the Communist Parties of the Balkan countries, and above all the

C.P. of Bulgaria, to master the Leninist-Stalinist doctrine, in helping them to bolshevize themselves, in helping them in their struggle against counter-revolutionary, petty-bourgeois vacillations. Dimitrov devoted all the experience of his previous activity, illumined by Leninist self-criticism, all his abilities and powers to the struggle to carry out the line of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, which alone insures victory in the coming battles of the proletariat.

Dimitrov's first days and months in emigration, when he was still in Yugoslavia, were filled with the struggle for the further bolshevization of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Shortly after crossing the Yugoslavian border, Dimitrov and Kolarov sent an open letter into the country by illegal means, addressed to the members of the Party, and to all workers and peasants. This letter gave a preliminary appraisal of the uprising, discussed the prospects of further revolutionary development, warned the Party and the working class against confusion, against capitulationism, called upon the Party to rally its ranks.

This open letter, along with the whole line pursued by the *Rebotnichesky Vesnik* (*Workers' Courier*), the central organ of the Bulgarian Communist Party, then edited by him, gave support to that group in the Party which took the stand of the September uprising and which waged a struggle against the Rights and the renegades who kept repeating that "it was wrong to take up arms."

After this, Dimitrov, in a number of articles published in the labor press abroad, exposed the numerous acts of provocation committed by the government in regard to the Communist Party and explained the thesis of the Comintern: For mass work, against individual terror and isolated guerilla actions. These articles in the *International Press Correspondence* became part of

the guiding line of the Party in the country. Thus Dimitrov, as a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and of its bureau abroad, carried on a persistent struggle for a mass Bolshevik party in Bulgaria.

In Vienna, at the end of 1923, Dimitrov also began to launch that tremendous international struggle against fascism which from that time on becomes one of the most valuable tasks of his revolutionary activity. He mobilized the attention and the forces of the world proletariat against the open bloody dictatorship of finance capital which, as had already been shown at that time by the experience of Italy and Bulgaria, is aimed at the suppression of the maturing revolution. He explained to the workers what the fascist form of bourgeois dictatorship means for them. He warned the European proletariat against the idea that fascism is an accidental and isolated phenomenon, peculiar only to the southeast of Europe. By quoting concrete examples of fascist violence in the Balkan countries, Dimitrov showed the proletarians of other capitalist countries the true face of fascism.

Soon after the September uprising of 1923, Dimitrov organized a campaign against fascist terror in Bulgaria and carried on a struggle to save the Bulgarian revolutionaries confined in the concentration camps of Yugoslavia. He also waged a vigorous struggle against the ferocious bourgeois-landlord terror which was descending upon the revolutionary workers and peasants of Rumania, and against the cruel terror of the semi-fascist bourgeoisie in Greece who were frequently driving the Communist Party into illegality and consigning revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers to hard labor jails.

After the military-fascist *coup d'état* in Yugoslavia (1929), Dimitrov carried on great work in organizing a campaign of international solidarity against the unprecedented ferocities of Yugoslavian fascism.

Dimitrov used the experience he had gained in the struggle against fascism as the basis of his report on fascism at the Fourth Congress of the Profintern (1928).

In this report Dimitrov emphasized the vital need for the revolutionary trade unions to win over to their side the broadest masses of the people in order to give a rebuff to fascism. He warned the workers against the treachery of the reformist leaders, who were paving fascism's way to power, and predicted even at that time to the German and Austrian proletariat that their trade union bureaucrats and social-fascist leaders at the present day would openly go over to fascism.

Throughout all these years Dimitrov headed the *Balkan Communist Federation*, which co-ordinated activities throughout the Balkan countries and organized the mutual aid of Communist Parties there. As secretary of this federation, he performed an especially great work in helping the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, putting an end to the protracted factional quarrels in the Party and fighting for the solution of the main problems of the labor movement in the complex situation prevailing in that country. Dimitrov did a great deal to help the Party in the struggle against the leader of Right opportunism, Semich, to raise and solve the national question in Yugoslavia in a Leninist way, in the spirit of the teachings of Comrade Stalin.*

For all the Balkan Communist Parties the task of establishing a close and firm link with the masses was also dependent upon a correct solution of the national question. Dimitrov devoted especially great attention to the attainment of a Leninist solution of the Macedonian national question in the Balkans. All the Balkan Communist Parties required this, since all of them in their work came up against the Macedonian problem. Partitioned into three parts and split up among Bulgaria,

* See J. V. Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I.

Yugoslavia and Greece, the Macedonian people loudly proclaimed their existence by means of an armed guerilla struggle which continued unabated for a number of years. Dimitrov's work was directed towards winning over the broad masses of the people from the influence of the bourgeoisie and directing them to the path of a struggle for national liberation under the leadership of the Communist Parties. He played a great part in the creation of a Macedonian national revolutionary organization (the V.M.R.O) ** and in further strengthening this organization.

Dimitrov also helped the other national revolutionary organizations in the Balkans. The young Albanian movement for national liberation, and also those in Thrace, Transylvania, the Dobrudja, and Croatia found support only in the Balkan Communist Federation headed by Dimitrov. On more than one occasion Dimitrov helped them solve the problems that confronted them. He devoted tremendous and valuable labor to the task of explaining to the Communist Parties the Leninist-Stalinist standpoint on the national question and on the peasant question which is indissolubly linked up with it, of applying in the Balkan countries the Leninist slogan of the right of oppressed peoples to self-determination, including the right of secession. He rendered great aid to the Greek Communist Party in the solution of the Macedonian question and to the Rumanian Communist Party in formulating the Dobrudjan, Transylvanian and other questions.

During this time Dimitrov taught the Balkan Communist Parties to take a correct stand in all questions of the inner party life of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, taught them to give a crushing rebuff to all attempts of

** Initials for Supreme Macedonian Revolutionary Organization.

Trotskyism and Right opportunism to penetrate into their ranks, and to rid themselves of the Social-Democratic traditions which they had not yet overcome. Dimitrov was able quickly to discern every deviation from the general line of the Comintern—and of the C.P.S.U. He mercilessly castigated Trotskyism, he attacked with all his might the united Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition, he gave a crushing rebuff to Right opportunism. Thus, in the struggle for the Leninist-Stalinist line of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., he aided the bolshevization of the Balkan Communist Parties.

The year 1928. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern. On the basis of the analysis of the international situation the Communist International pointed out that a new period had come, in which all the internal and external contradictions of capitalism were accentuated to an extreme degree. It pointed out that this would lead to a further shattering of capitalist stabilization and of the whole system of capitalism. It pointed to coming class battles on a gigantic scale, to the growing menace of capitalist war, and of a counter-revolutionary war against the U.S.S.R.

The whole course of world development since the Sixth Congress of the Comintern has shown that the Communist International spoke the truth. The world economic crisis, the end of capitalist stabilization, the desperate plight of the impoverished worker and peasant masses, the war in China and Manchuria, the feverish preparations for war throughout the whole world, the preparations for an armed attack on the U.S.S.R., the growth of fascism, the bloody suppression of the revolutionary labor movement, the crisis of the Second International—this is what we see in the camp of capitalism.

Magnificent victories of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the successes of the policy of peace pursued by the proletarian state,

the victories of the Soviet revolution in China, the revolution in Spain, the February armed struggle in Austria, the recent general strike in France, the strengthening of the positions of the Communist International—this is what we see in the camp of the proletariat.

Events point to a new imperialist war.

Events point to a world revolutionary crisis. Events point to a new round of revolutions and wars.

During all these years Dimitrov carried on persistent work in order to mobilize the broadest masses of the proletariat for struggle against fascism, against the menace of a new imperialist war, for the defense of the U.S.S.R.

As a representative of the Balkan countries, Dimitrov participated in the work of the League Against Imperialism.

He also took part in the organization of the World Anti-War Congress at Amsterdam.

In all his varied work Dimitrov indefatigably and vigorously fought for the line of the Comintern, and his firmness and persistence enabled him to carry his line into effect.

On the basis of the Leninist-Stalinist theory of proletarian revolution, Dimitrov, the proletarian revolutionary, at the same time subjected to criticism the grave mistakes committed by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, to which he himself belonged, both at the time of the Vladya uprising and at the time of the fascist *coup d'état* of June 9, 1923. In the fire of Bolshevik self-criticism the Social-Democratic survivals of the *Tesnyak* past of the Bulgarian Communist Party melted away.

All the tremendous political, ideological and organizational activity of Dimitrov demanded that he work hard to improve his own education. Dimitrov found time for this, throughout all these years. Illegal lodgings, secret meeting places, illegal

visits from comrades, illegal papers and print-shops, the transmission of illegal literature, the illegal holding of plenums and conferences, all these followed one another in quick succession in Dimitrov's daily life.

A respite was provided by his journeys to the U.S.S.R. But even these intervals of respite were filled with work in the Executive Committee of the Comintern and the Profintern and with work in connection with the Bulgarian Communist Party.

Dimitrov has two death sentences on his head, passed on him in his absence by Bulgarian fascism.

The first sentence was passed on him as one of the leaders of the September uprising of 1923, several months after the suppression of this uprising.

The second sentence was passed on him in 1926 as a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party as a result of a framed trial organized by the fascist against the leaders of the Communist Party. In preparing for the Leipzig trial the fascist authorities in Germany tried to establish a connection between this sentence and the explosion in Sofia Cathedral.

"Only ignorant persons and fools can confuse plots and individual terror with the policy of the Comintern in the mass revolutionary movement," said Stalin at the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.

Comrade Dimitrov, as a true pupil of Comrade Stalin, has more than once spoken out against the tactics of plots and individual terror. He has more than once decisively refuted the charge that the Bulgarian Communist Party organized the explosion in Sofia Cathedral. By his whole experience of revolutionary work he has shown that Communists and the Comintern based themselves in their struggle upon the masses alone.

For ten years Dimitrov has been working in the general staff of the world proletarian revolution—in the Executive Committee of the Comintern. During these years Dimitrov has rendered permanent services to the international proletarian movement. At the Leipzig trial Dimitrov rose up in his full stature before the world proletariat, displaying in their full brilliance his exceptional abilities, his iron will, his uncommon pertinacity ; he appeared at this trial as a genuine Bolshevik, a leader of the proletarian revolution. Dimitrov has grown up in the continual economic and political battles of the proletariat, has grown up in the struggle against reformism. The courage which Dimitrov showed at the Leipzig trial was forged in the struggle for the cause of the proletariat, the struggle under the banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

Leipzig

THE BURNING OF THE REICHSTAG

FROM the moment when the Leipzig trial began, the name of Dimitrov was on everybody's tongue. Dimitrov is now known not only in Bulgaria, not only to the active members of the Communist Parties—Dimitrov is now known to the broadest masses of workers and peasants in all countries, he is known to hundreds of millions. They know and love him, because since the Leipzig trial the name of Dimitrov has become a symbol of courageous and heroic struggle against fascism.

The whole world followed the course of the Leipzig trial with tense interest. Let us, however, first recall briefly the events which preceded this trial.

On January 30, 1933, the German president appointed Hitler, the leader of the fascists, Chancellor.

Fascist dictatorship was set up in Germany. The most reactionary, the most chauvinist and the most imperialist elements of finance capital came into power. The working class, split by the treacherous policy of social-fascism, could not prevent fascism's advent to power. But the German Communist Party was not beaten. It has remained the sole enemy threatening the existence of fascism. At the last Reichstag elections in November 1930, the Communists received six million votes. They undoubtedly had behind them the most revolutionary and militant part of the working class and were beginning to win over its majority. In order to consolidate its rule, German fascism set itself the task of destroying the Communist Party at all costs. Before the eyes of the international bourgeoisie German fascism painted an alluring prospect of routing not only German Communism but also the bulwark of world Bolshevism—the U.S.S.R.

But to destroy the German Communist Party was no easy task. To do it, German fascism had to scare the petty bourgeoisie, who were panic-stricken as a result of the crisis, with the specter of the "Communist danger," to set them against the working class, to find a surer and broader base among the petty bourgeoisie in its reactionary plans. What was needed was a startling act of anti-Communist provocation, calculated to terrify the frightened petty bourgeoisie. A beginning was made with police reports regarding the results of searches made in the Karl Liebknecht House, where the Central Committee of the Communist Party had legally held its quarters for a number of years prior to the fascist *coup d'etat*. But these reports were so clumsily concocted that they raised a smile even among people who did not sympathize with Communism. Nobody believed that in the Karl Liebknecht House, where the police had made raids and searches almost every week during the recent past, the Communists had kept their plans for an uprising, had constructed hidden catacombs, secret passages, etc. Some more powerful expedient was needed. And thus the idea of burning the Reichstag took shape in the minds of the fascist leaders. A number of witnesses say that the author of this "brain wave" was Gobbels, the man upon whose initiative hundreds of thousands of books, representing the best creations of human genius, were consigned to the bonfire.

On the evening of February 27 the news went around Berlin that the Reichstag building was on fire. Hitler was soon upon the scene of the fire, and in the presence of the foreign journalists he declared: "It is the hand of God. Now we will strike at the Communists."

And on that same night governmental reports were already being fabricated to the effect that the Communists had set fire to the Reichstag.

The only man who had been arrested in the Reichstag building, a certain Van der Lubbe, was declared to be a Communist. A Communist Party membership card was found on him—so the police reported. Later on, the police themselves were compelled to admit that no Communist Party card had been found on Van der Lubbe.

The police were hard at work. Meanwhile, however, on the second day after the fire, one bourgeois paper in Berlin had already blurted out the fact that the Reichstag building has only one secret underground passage by which it would have been possible for the incendiaries to make their way. This passage leads to the house of the chairman of the German Reichstag, Goering. World public opinion, which saw clearly that it was not the Communists who had set fire to the Reichstag, was now on the alert.

But the German police did their duty; they issued a series of ridiculous reports directed against the Communists. On the day after the fire the leader of the Communist group in the Reichstag, Ernst Torgler, presented himself before the police in order to refute the police lies to the effect that the Communists had had a hand in the fire. Torgler was arrested on a charge of complicity in the burning of the Reichstag. On March 9, Dimitrov, with two Bulgarian Communists, Popov and Tanev, were arrested in Berlin. All three were confronted with the altogether fantastic and senseless charge of complicity in the burning of the Reichstag.

Meanwhile, however, fresh facts were coming to light every day which convicted the German fascists of the burning of the Reichstag. On the basis of these facts the world press was able to give a detailed picture of the burning of the Reichstag by the fascists. In particular, the so-called memorandum of the Nationalist leader, Oberföhrer, acquired

especially widespread fame. Oberföhren himself was shortly afterwards found murdered in his apartment.

From this memorandum it also became known how the fascists had engineered the fire, how the fascist incendiaries had made their way into the Reichstag by the underground passage from Goering's house. The whole world learned who the true incendiaries were. It was not, of course, the half-blind Van der Lubbe who had done it all by himself. One of the fascist storm troops was designated for this "work of state import."

"A storm of indignation swept the civilized world. On the initiative of the revolutionary workers of Europe, a Commission of Enquiry was formed, consisting of some of the world's best lawyers, jurists and public men; this commission set about examining all the data regarding the fire which found their way into the press or which fell into the hands of the commission itself. Along with this a widespread campaign of protest was launched among the many millions of the proletarian masses throughout the whole world, headed by the Communist parties. The *Brown Book* was published, exposing the true incendiaries of the Reichstag on the basis of documentary facts and painting a hair-raising picture of fascist terror in Germany. But Comrade Dimitrov and his comrades, cruelly isolated as they were, did not know prior to the beginning of the trial or during the trial itself of this struggle against the fascist incendiaries which was being waged throughout the world; they did not read the *Brown Book*, did not know of the work of the international Commission of Enquiry in Paris.

THE TRUTH ABOUT COMMUNISM

ON September 21, 1933, the framed Leipzig trial began—the most odious trial in the history of counter-revolution

against revolution, of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. For six months the fascists fabricated their indictment against the four arrested Communists ; for six months they kept them in prison bound in fetters. According to the calculations of the fascists, physical and moral torture was to break the will of the revolutionaries. And the main factor in the preparations for the trial was that campaign of white terror which was launched throughout the country. After the burning of the Reichstag came the bloody March days of 1933. Thousands of proletarian revolutionaries were tortured or murdered, persecutions were started against the Jews, a campaign against science and culture was begun. All this terror, once again according to the calculations of the fascists was to break down the physique and the morale of the revolutionary proletariat and, in particular, to secure the recruiting of false witnesses for the trial.

"Owing to the unusually protracted character of the trial, owing to the direct interference of the ministry in the course of the investigation, owing to the mysterious references to unheard-of horrors, owing to high-flown assertions about a conspiracy embracing all Europe, owing to the outrageously brutal treatment of the prisoners, the trial had swollen into a *proces monstre*,* which attracted the attention of the European press and strained to the highest degree the suspicious curiosity of the public. The Prussian government had driven itself into a position where the prosecution was compelled to provide proofs for the sake of appearances. The jury was compelled to demand proofs for the sake of appearances. The jury in its turn was itself standing before another jury—the jury of public opinion.

"In order to remedy the first blunder, the government was compelled to commit a second one. The police, who functioned

* Monster trial.

as examining magistrates during the preliminary examination, were compelled to appear as witnesses during the proceedings. Side by side with the normal counsel for prosecution the government was compelled to place an abnormal one, side by side with the public prosecutor—the police. ... The intervention of the ... state power in court had become inevitable, in order, by means of the miraculous ministrations of the police, to keep the legal prosecution continually supplied with facts whose shadows they were vainly chasing. The court understood this position so well that president, judge and public prosecutor in turn relinquished their functions with the most praiseworthy resignation to the police magistrate and witness ... and were continually vanishing behind his back."

These lines vividly characterize the preparations for and the course of the Leipzig trial. *Actually, they refer to another trial—to the Cologne trial, which took place eighty years ago, in the year 1853, and they are from the pen of that great teacher of the proletariat—Karl Marx. (Karl Marx, Revelations on the Communist Trial at Cologne).*

Eighty years have passed since the Cologne trial. During these years the face of the world has changed beyond recognition. Communism has grown into a mighty force, reshaping the whole system of the life of mankind. On one-sixth of the earth's surface, the Communists have led the toilers to victory and are building Socialism. The banner of Communism waves over one-quarter of the territory of China. Under the banner of Communism the toilers in all countries are advancing to storm the citadel of capitalism. But the German fascists, with unsurpassed stupidity, continue to repeat the old nonsense, exposed eighty years ago, to the effect that the Communists engineer plots, arson, explosions, that they employ individual terror, that they construct catacombs, etc.

The bourgeoisie in their decline are indeed losing the light of reason.

The Communist Dimitrov answered this obsolete nonsense by telling the truth about Communism. This truth strikes terror into the bourgeoisie. It is not for nothing that Lenin taught the Communists, when they are brought before a bourgeois court :

"It is best to declare right away, before the court examination, in answer to the first questions of the president, that 'I am a Social-Democrat and will tell you in my speech what this means.'"

Dimitrov hurled in the faces of his accusers the *truth* about Communism. He quoted the great words of Karl Marx :

"They (the Communists) openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite !" *

From the hall of the Leipzig court Dimitrov proclaimed to the world the fundamentals of the Communist world philosophy. In answer to the first questions in court he declared :

"I am a proletarian revolutionary. I am a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Consequently, I am one of the leading Communists and as such I am ready to take full responsibility for all decisions, all documents and all actions of the Bulgarian Communist Party and of the Communist International. And precisely for this reason I must declare that I am not a terrorist adventurer and not a putschist. I am

* The concluding words of the *Communist Manifesto*.

a passionate adherent of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. And it is just because of this that I see the only way out in this proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. ...

"I am an enthusiastic follower of the Soviet Union and of Communism. I regard with supreme respect the leader of the world proletariat—Stalin." (September 23, 1933.)

The Leipzig judges were dumbfounded. They had been expecting any sort of defense rather than this. They did not know that the Communists defend not themselves but their Party, not their lives but their views. They tried by every means in their power to make Dimitrov hold his tongue. But it was already too late. The whole world proletariat, and first and foremost the German proletariat, shackled in the fetters of fascist dictatorship, listened with tense eagerness to every word of the courageous proletarian leader, standing before the fascist court.

Dimitrov was carrying out Lenin's instructions. Every word, every tactical move made by him at the Leipzig trial was a classic example of how to make Leninist use of a bourgeois court.

FASCISM EXPOSED

LENIN taught :

"To ask for a lawyer means to take part in the preliminary investigations. But why not take part, in order to entrap the witnesses and agitate against the court. Of course, one must be on one's guard, so as not to fall into a tone of misplaced self-justification. This goes without saying . . . But if the facts are shaky, if the police witnesses become confused and lie, then it is hardly worth depriving yourself of agitational material for exposing the frame-up nature of the court."

Dimitrov the Leninist stood before the court as an accuser. He attacked. He did not try to "justify himself." From prisoner he became converted into judge.

Dimitrov accused the leaders of fascism of provocation in regard to the Communists. He accused them of unprecedentedly ferocious terrorism against the working class. He accused them of having treated him and his comrades barbarously. He accused the court of not having permitted him to choose a counsel for defense. He accused the official counsel for defense assigned to him (Teichert) of having done nothing in order to procure the necessary materials for the defense. He accused the public prosecutor of forgery, he interrupted the reading of the indictment with the declaration that the majority of the charges against the accused Communists had been invented after the end of the preliminary examination, that he was now hearing them for the first time. Convinced that his words would sooner or later find their way to the masses, he accused the Bulgarian government of executing 20,000 revolutionary workers and peasants.

The veil of secrecy which covered the bourgeois court and the investigations was torn asunder by the resolute hand of the revolutionary, who looked death in the face with unflinching gaze. Before the eyes of the world the true face of fascism—the ferocious strangler of the masses—was laid bare. It was no accident that on this occasion the world bourgeoisie hypocritically hastened to dissociate itself from German fascism; it was trying to preserve one of the main weapons of its dictatorship—the authority of the bourgeois court and of bourgeois "justice."

THE POLICE EXPOSED

THE workers of the world followed with admiration the struggle which Dimitrov was waging at Leipzig, exposing with

Bolshevik pertinacity, talent and resourcefulness the fascist witnesses who were recruited from among the police and stool pigeons.

The first group of fascist witnesses consisted of police officials. Among them must be numbered also the prosecutor of the supreme court, Vogt, who had conducted the preliminary examination of the accused. These most valued "witnesses" were to have unfolded a picture of how the Communists burned the Reichstag. They failed. The witnesses tried to prove that Van der Lubbe, who had been arrested in the burning buildings of the Reichstag, was a Communist, although Van der Lubbe himself denied this on the very first day of the trial; that Dimitrov, Torgler, Popov and Tanev had held meetings with him; that Dimitrov had been an incendiary and terrorist in the past and had engineered the explosion in Sofia Cathedral in 1925.

Under the fire of Dimitrov's relentless questions, all the endeavors of the fascists proved abortive. Thus, the police official, Markovsky, alleged that Van der Lubbe had declared during the examination that he was a Communist and that he had given the names of certain Communist deputies to the Reichstag with whom he was connected.

Dimitrov intervenes: "From what time was a translator invited to attend the examination of Van der Lubbe?"

The "defense" is alarmed. The startled president of the court, Bonger, asks Dimitrov the purpose of his question.

Dimitrov develops his idea further:

"At my examinations a 'translator' was present from the very first, although I know German well."

Dimitrov continues his attack upon Markovsky: "Did Markovsky ask Van der Lubbe about me at the examination?"

Markovsky is already in retreat. He is compelled to acknowledge that when Van der Lubbe was shown the photographs of the other accused, he declared that he did not know these persons.

Dimitrov accuses Vogt, the examining magistrate, of having incorrectly drawn up the minutes of the preliminary examinations. The president of the court, Bonger, is dumbfounded, but he is forced to question Vogt as to the methods used in the preliminary investigation. From Vogt's statement is made clear that Dimitrov did not sign the minutes.

Dimitrov drives Vogt into a corner :

"On April 1, that is before the beginning of the preliminary investigation, did Vogt, as examining magistrate, publish information containing the statement that Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev had set fire to the Reichstag together with Van der Lubbe ? I ask—yes or no ?"

The chairman calls Dimitrov to order : he threatens to deprive him of the right to put questions.

But Dimitrov has already achieved what he wanted. Vogt is forced to admit that information of this kind was given to the press. In the same words he blurts out that the information given to the press also contained the allegation that the three arrested Bulgarians had a hand in the explosion of the Sofia Cathedral.

Dimitrov does not allow Vogt to get away from the subject of his first question.

"I was not talking at all about the alleged attempt to blow up Sofia Cathedral, but only about the fact that before the beginning of the preliminary investigation the counsel for prosecution circulated a categorical statement that I had taken part in the burning of the Reichstag.

"I want to prove by this that the prosecution was tendentious and that public opinion was led astray."

The president was beside himself: "I am not going to stand this any longer. Be silent. You have no right to insult the prosecutor."

But Dimitrov is as relentless as before: "Why did you tell Van der Lubbe that Torgler had already acknowledged his guilt?"

Vogt is flabbergasted. With inimitable stupidity he cries:

"I am a German judge, prosecutor of the imperial tribunal and my name is Vogt."

Dimitrov presses his attack home:

"On the basis of the Code of Legal Procedure I must mention that the fact that I was kept bound in chains is contrary to the law."

They try to stop Dimitrov's mouth, but he stubbornly insists on one point. The inquiry into the case was incorrect, tendencious and rude; they did not look for the incendiaries where they were to be found, and before the eyes of the world they committed an unheard-of piece of forgery, putting four Communists in the dock as "incendiaries."

"It follows from the police evidence," declares Dimitrov, "that the whole program of the German Communist Party is being accused, that the six million Germans who voted at the election for the program of Communism should be put in the dock."

By order of the chairman, the police forcibly compel Dimitrov to sit down. An intermission. The court retires to consult. Dimitrov is deprived of the right to speak. But it is already too late. The police officials and the magistrate, Vogt, have been convicted by Dimitrov as outrageous forgers.

The press abroad is already writing about the collapse of the trial. The *Brown Book* is being circulated throughout the whole world in hundreds of thousands of copies. It is in great demand. Excerpts from the *Brown Book* are reprinted in

almost all newspapers. The Leipzig court is forced to take the defensive. In order to refute the facts stated in the *Brown Book*, the court is already trying to prove that Van der Lubbe set fire to the Reichstag by himself. For if Van der Lubbe was not alone, then the question arises—who were his accomplices and how did they succeed in getting out of the Reichstag building? Then the *Brown Book* would be right in its assertion that Van der Lubbe's accomplices were Storm Troops who made their way out of the blazing building by an underground passage leading to Goring's house.

Dimitrov immediately detects the maneuvers of the court.

"But how is it possible that Van der Lubbe, who would not be able to set fire by himself to a wooden hut in Neukolln, suddenly set fire to the huge Reichstag building all by himself?"

Van der Lubbe mumbles :

"I don't know."

On Dimitrov's question as to where Van der Lubbe obtained the materials for the fire, the latter asks leave not to answer, upon which Dimitrov exclaims outright :

"That's to say, you were not alone, you were a weapon in the hands of others."

In vain does President Burger storm and rage, in vain does he bawl in his impotence : "Who is president here,—you or I?"

Dimitrov is more than once expelled from the court. But he fearlessly continues to conduct the trial. Point blank, he asks the question which the fascists dread most of all :

"Did not the incendiaries make their way through an underground passage leading to the Reichstag?"

His aim is attained. This is proved by the judge's horror-stricken cry that "this question will not be put."

The court produces against Dimitrov some forged documents of various kinds, alleged to have been found upon him when

he was searched. In answer to the public prosecutor's question as to whether the *Guide to Berlin*, on which a number of buildings are marked with "mysterious" crosses, belongs to him, Dimitrov coolly answered :

"I used to have such a book, but I don't know if that is the one. They showed me this book at the police station, but I can't answer for your political police."

Next comes the pseudo-witness Hellmer, a restaurant waiter, who, contrary to the categorical declaration of ten other waiters in the same restaurant, alleges that he saw Dimitrov in the restaurant together with Van der Lubbe. Dimitrov observes that he was in this restaurant in company with the Austrian author, Rosner. The chairman of the court explains that it has been impossible to verify this statement of Dimitrov's, since Rosner "could not be found." Dimitrov gives him the crushing reply :

"Have a good look in your concentration camps."

Next comes a typical fascist witness—Hornemann, the doorkeeper of the Reichstag. After the public prosecutor was compelled to admit several days ago that on February 27 and 28 Dimitrov was in Munich, Hornemann stubbornly declares that he saw Dimitrov in the Reichstag building on the day of the fire. There is general laughter throughout the hall. Dimitrov laughs too :

"I want to know who paid the witness for his evidence."

Dimitrov is reprimanded for this remark. In answer he ejaculates :

"I congratulate the public prosecutor on having found such a witness."

The next to "bear witness" is Denschel, a hireling of the Social-Democratic party of the Reichstag. He alleges that he saw Torgler with Popov in the Reichstag on the day of the

fire. Dimitrov remarks that in his first deposition given to the prosecutor eight months ago, the witness made no mention of this fact.

"It is strange, Mr. Chairman, how things develop like this. And this is not the first time. The witness Hornemann has also had a belated accession to his knowledge. The witness has the astounding gift of a memory which wakes up after the event."

Dimitrov is deprived of the right to speak for "insolent" remarks. But Denschel is compelled to take back his evidence.

The former mayor Weberstedt, head of the press department of the National-Socialist Party, is next to appear in the witness box. He impudently asserts that he often saw Tanev in the Reichstag, although it has been established in court that Tanev did not arrive in Berlin until February 24—that is, three days before the trial. Under cross-examination, the witness becomes confused and there is loud laughter in the court.

Dimitrov observes :

"The National-Socialists have made a very good distribution of roles at the trial. One declares that he saw Van der Lubbe in the Reichstag, a second says that he saw Dimitrov, a third—Popov, and a fourth—Tanev. This is how German officers conduct themselves."

Laughed at and exposed, the fascist officials and police officers leave the court. A new category of witnesses comes to relieve them—the stool-pigeons.

STOOL-PIGEONS IN THE WITNESS BOX

FIRST to enter the witness box is the "witness" for the prosecution, Hinz. He admits he was entrusted by a police colonel with the task of "taking part in Communist demonstrations." In his day Hinz has been exposed by the Berlin organisation

of the Communist Party as a fascist *agent provocateur*. He is brought into court straight from prison, where he is serving a sentence for a criminal offense. The long list of sentences passed on Hinz for criminal offenses is read out in court. The list includes even such exploits as a plan to raid the unemployment relief fund—a plan which he subsequently disclosed to the police.

Dimitrov asks why the court admits such inveterate criminals in the capacity of witness. The chairman of the court is compelled to give the order for Hinz to be removed.

He is succeeded by Grothe, one of the prosecution's principal witness. Dimitrov scrutinizes him closely. Without much difficulty he proves Grothe is a psychopath. He demands a medical examination of Grothe's mental condition. The examination confirms Dimitrov's statement.

The third is Kampf. From the court records it is shown that he has been a thief from youth and was three times sentenced to hard labor as an incorrigible offender.

The next to appear is Liebermann. During the examination of his case it was shown that his evidence was contradictory because he was "of unsound mind."

Dimitrov demands an explanation as to why these witnesses have been called. The president interrupts him. Dimitrov insists :

"Allow me to speak as one of the accused. I call things by their proper names. Of course, it is a great pity for the prosecution that the majority of its witnesses are either psychopaths or criminal offenders"

With well-aimed questions Dimitrov lays bare the inner nature of the fascist witnesses. Quailing in terror before his biting questions, guiltily hiding their confused and furtive eyes, they retire one by one—twenty police officials of the detective and criminal police, eight officials, six *provocateurs*, two stool-pigeons.

FASCIST-TROTSKYIST WITNESSES

Even the appearance of three fascist deputies—Karwahne, Frey and Kroyer—as witnesses does not save the prosecution. These three declare that they saw Torgler in the Reichstag with Van der Lubbe, and also with Popov and Tanev. On the morning after the fire, when the police report was already published in the newspapers, they decided that the fire had been started by Torgler and went to inform the police about this.

Dimitrov demands from Kroyer an explanation of the contradiction between his depositions at the preliminary investigation, where he said that he went to see Goring on that night, whereas he now says in court that he visited Goring on the next day.

Kroyer gives an answer worthy of a satirist:

"It was five minutes after midnight—that's the next day."

Dimitrov shrugs his shoulders:

"The term 'next day' is generally taken to mean something differently. I have the impression that the witness's evidence consists of lies, that it was invented after receiving corresponding instructions." It is clear to all that Dimitrov is hinting at Goring from whom Kroyer did indeed receive "corresponding instructions."

The judge threatens to deprive Dimitrov of the right to speak.

But Dimitrov quickly aims a blow against the whole proceedings. He puts this question to the Reichstag deputy in the witness box, who is the highest National-Socialist functionary in regard to Austrian affairs:

"Does the witness know that the National-Socialists in Austria are working illegally, that they employ forged passports,

illegal lodgings, and that their positions in this respect do not differ from the one in which I found myself as a Bulgarian Communist in Berlin?"

The frenzied deputy cries in confusion :

"What has this to do with the fire ? As a German, I have the right to work in Austria. You must see the difference."

Dimitrov calmly explains with a sarcastic smile :

"I am very well aware of the difference between the National-Socialists and the Communists. I only wanted to point out that under conditions of illegality it is not only Communist who use forged passports."

The deputy Karwahne was formerly a member of the Trotskyist group of Katz in Germany. His hysterical flood of words is cut short by Dimitrov's question :

"You, Karwahne, are now an influential National-Socialist, for otherwise you would not be a deputy to the Reichstag."

From Trotskyism to fascism. One well-aimed blow lays bare the path of development of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyist groups and groupings.

A DUEL WITH MINISTERS

To rescue the stranded ship of fascist "justice", two fascist ministers come hurrying to the trial—Goring and Gobbels.

The court becomes the scene of a historic duel between the representative of two classes—the dying bourgeoisie and the victorious proletariat, between Dimitrov and Goring. The talented proletarian artist John Hartfield has depicted this scene in a striking photomontage, now known to the world, representing the greatness of the Communist, Dimitrov, and the insignificance of the fascist minister, Goring.

Goring, the most powerful man in fascist Germany besides Hitler, appears in court, escorted by a special guard and greeted

by the audience, who rise from ~~their~~ ^{front} seats and raise their hands in the fascist salute, ready to applaud his every word.

After the minister has spoken for an hour and a half against the Communists, Dimitrov takes matters into his own hands. At the very first question of Dimitrov, the minister loses self-control. But the questions follow one after the other :

"It has been established that in the night before the fire Van der Lubbe went to Hennigsdorf and there made the acquaintance of persons whose names are not yet known. What did you, as Minister of Home Affairs, do on February 28 and 29 in order to determine in what way the fire had occurred and how Van der Lubbe had penetrated into the Reichstag? Hennigsdorf is a police flop-house, and there above all, among the men of the police and persons conducted with them, it was necessary to look for traces of the crime." By this question Dimitrov emphasizes his accusation against Minister Goring of direct complicity in the burning of the Reichstag.

The minister declares that he gave general instructions to look for traces of the crime, that he also gave instructions that the Hennigsdorf police flop-house should be searched. In other words, the minister retreated ; in other words, the collapse of the proceedings was glaringly revealed at Hennigsdorf—such was the thought which forced itself upon every one who was following the course of the trial. Dimitrov, however, continues to press home his attack :

"You have declared that it was the Communists who set fire to the Reichstag. Did not this assumption of yours have some influence on the police inquiry?"

The minister tries to get out of the difficulty :

"The police were given order to conduct a search in all directions. I, as Minister of Home Affairs gave general in-

structions, and it was the duty of the police to establish details and facts. The activity of the Communist Party, its criminal views, were an indication that the incendiaries were to be sought for precisely in this direction.

Dimitrov declares with dignity that the Communist Party is fighting and will continue to fight against fascism, and that it will emerge victorious from this struggle. He asks the minister :

"You, as Minister of Home Affairs, declared in the press on February 28 that Torgler had taken part in the burning of the Reichstag and that Van der Lubbe had a Communist Party card on him. On what basis was such an allegation made ?"

Goring tries to explain :

"If the agents of the criminal police said this on the evening of the fire, then that means there was basis for it."

But Dimitrov gives it him straight from the shoulder :

"But here in court the agents of the criminal police have unanimously declared that they did not find any party card on Van der Lubbe."

Convicted of lying, Goring reddens and begins to curse :

"I am convinced that the incendiaries are to be sought for only among the adherents of your criminal views."

Dimitrov delivers a decisive blow :

"Is the Prime Minister aware that the Party which bases itself on these 'criminal views' is governing a sixth part of the world—the Soviet Union ?"

"Unfortunately"—Goring bursts out.

"Is the Prime Minister aware," Dimitrov continues, "that Germany maintains diplomatic relations with this state, that the Soviet Union gives work and bread to hundreds of thousands of German workers by its orders ?"

The president of the court hastens to the aid of Minister Goring and demands that Dimitrov "discontinue carrying on Communist propaganda."

"Goring is carrying on national-socialist propaganda here. Communist views are not a crime," comes Dimitrov's answer.

Goring, unable to control himself, foaming at the mouth, advances upon Dimitrov with clenched fists.

"I did not come here in order that you might question me like a judge, in order that you might hurl reproaches at me. You are a scoundrel, who ought to have been on the gallows long ago!"

The chairman once again tries to save the situation for the court and the minister, pointing out to Dimitrov :

"You see how you have caused the witness to lose patience and incited him to this outburst by your Communist propaganda."

Dimitrov throws light on the political meaning of this scene with one calm remark, which speaks volumes :

"I am very well satisfied with these answers of the Minister."

The frenzied minister, despite the fact that he is only a witness in this court, orders the police to remove Dimitrov.

Stressing his words, Dimitrov answers with a sarcastic smile :

"Maybe you are afraid of my questions, Mr. Prime minister?"

Dimitrov, protesting, is forcibly removed by the police. The court hurriedly endorses Goring's order and passes a decision to expel Dimitrov.

Through the uproar which terminates this duel between the representatives of two classes, the voice of the enraged minister can be heard shouting :

"You are a scoundrel! I am not afraid of you! Look out you don't fall into my hands when you get outside this court!"

The whole world was stirred to indignation by this savage scene. Before the Supreme Court the witness was threatening the prisoner with the gallows, and the president instantly expelled the prisoner from the court. And the whole world unanimously acknowledged that in this duel the victory rested with Dimitrov.

Gobbels, Minister of Propaganda, hurries to adjust this situation and to smooth out the bad impression created in Germany and abroad by Goring's behavior. He "knows the game," as the saying is. Is not this political buffoon reckoned the most highly skilled fascist "propagandist?" It was no accident that after Dimitrov's very first question, Gobbels summoning up his courage, boldly declared :

"I understand what Dimitrov is after. He is experienced in propaganda, but so am I. He will not make me lose my self-control."

By his attacks on the fascist ministers, by his exposure of the ideology of fascism, Dimitrov raises the political struggle of the trial to an ever higher level. He asks if it is true that individual National Socialists and whole groups of them have murdered workers. Gobbels evades the question, declaring that Hitler, the leader of fascism, would interfere and punish all who did such things.

Dimitrov quickly takes up Gobbels :

"But is it not true that the leader himself has sent greetings to murderers and expressed solidarity with them?"

Gobbels, the judges, all the world understands what he is referring to. He is referring to the telegram of greetings sent by Hitler to two fascists, condemned under the Papen government for murdering a worker.

Dimitrov enlarges upon his idea :

"Goring asserted before the court that Communism denotes murder. It is well known that several political murders were

committed in Germany after the war. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, the leaders of the working class, were murdered. Rathenau and Erzberger, bourgeois politicians, were also murdered. Will the witness please state who it was who committed these political murders in Germany. Is he aware that the murderers are to be sought for among Right Circles, the present allies of the National-Socialists?"

Gobbels again declines to answer. He asks;

"Does not Dimitrov want to begin his story from Adam and Eve?"

Dimitrov's answer clearly shows up the whole impotence of the minister:

"I am content with this answer: not to give direct answer is often the best answer of all."

Gobbels tries to soften the impression made by the involuntary confession which Dimitrov has forced out of him—that the National-Socialists are the organizers "of a large number of terrorist acts." He declares that the National-Socialists in the working class district had to be armed in order to defend themselves against the revolutionary workers.

"So the National-Socialists defended themselves, did they?" says Dimitrov, giving a skillful turn to his interrogation of the minister.

"Of course. Do you think we could allow ourselves to be exterminated by you?"

Dimitrov then demands an answer of the minister:

"Do you think now that the Communists have the same right to defend themselves? Why are they persecuted for doing so?"

Gobbels is at a loss for an answer. He, too, is obliged to save himself by flight. One after the other the ministers retire—ridiculed, beaten. In the fascist court, in their own

fascist environment, they have proved to be isolated. Not one of the fascist public present in court makes a single gesture of demonstration against Dimitrov. All can feel the scandalous failure of Goring, the impotence of Gobbels in the clash with that strength which radiates from Dimitrov. The whole fascist public sat as though spellbound by this indomitable strength and superiority of the proletarian revolutionary. Leaving the court, they spread throughout town and throughout country, held fast in the clutches of fascism, the news of this memorable session. From mouth to mouth through Germany the news is passed in whispers of the clash between Dimitrov and the fascist "fools upon the throne." And every reminiscence of this scene is accompanied by deadly laughter—laughter at the expense of the seemingly all-powerful ministers. And even in the minds of the fascists, the perplexing question arises: "Whence does Dimitrov derive this strength?" They cannot understand the truth that Dimitrov's strength is the strength of Communism, that his moral and political superiority is the moral and political superiority of the Communist teaching, tactic and strategy.

WITNESSES FROM FASCIST DUNGEONS

THE court proceeds to examine the main question: Did the Communist Party of Germany prepare for an armed uprising on February 27, and is it true that the burning of the Reichstag was to have been the signal for the uprising? This is the third political stage of the trial. A new group of witnesses appears upon the scene, side by side with the high officials of the political police, who were set the task of providing a "political basis" for the prosecution.

These were proletarians and sons of the German working class who for long months had been tortured in dungeons and

concentration camps by the fascist hangmen. The fascists tried to terrorize them with forged charges of "high treason." The fascist government was convinced that their spirit had already been broken. But here, too, fascism sustained one of its severest defeats. Dimitrov succeeded in exposing the methods used at the preliminary investigation of fascist "justice."

Workers from a small town in the neighborhood of Frankfurt-on-the-Main were brought from prison under escort. They were to "testify" that Communist meetings discussed an armed *coup d'etat*, the necessity of killing police officials and of engineering the blowing up of power stations. All these workers—Nickel, Jesse and Hieske—disputed the correctness of the evidence given by them at the preliminary investigation.

The fascist police expended great efforts in trying to discover, among the many thousands of fearless and indomitable German Communists who looked death dauntlessly in the face, at least one or two persons who could be used as police witnesses at this trial. These efforts proved fruitless.

The witness Jesse, for example, declares that he was compelled to give incorrect evidence.

"They threatened me that if I did not admit everything I would be severely beaten."

Dimitrov takes these "witnesses" under his protection.

"The witness has declared that he was threatened. This is very characteristic and typical... I demand that the police official who forced this evidence out of the witness be interrogated here. This business must be thoroughly cleared up."

After other witnesses also confirm the fact that the discussion at their meetings turned solely upon a united front of the workers, Dimitrov draws the conclusion :

"These witnesses have been called into court as witnesses for the prosecution. But they wholly withdraw their former dispositions, declaring that they were made under compulsion."

To all the workers who are called into court by the prosecution Dimitrov puts the question: Was the burning of the Reichstag understood by them as the signal for an armed uprising? All of them—from the activist Jesse to Felix, who left the Party—answered this question in the negative.

In this struggle the ably-formulated questions which Dimitrov put to the witnesses caused the proceedings to take a course contrary to that desired by the judges. This is the series of questions which Dimitrov formulated for one group of witnesses:

1. In January 1933, before the advent to power of the Hitler government, was the view prevalent in the ranks of the Communist Party that, if Hitler came to power, the Communist Party should declare an armed uprising? Was the question put in this way organizationally and politically in your Party nucleus?

2. In February, after the advent of power of the National-Socialist government, were there mass arrests of Communists in your district, the confiscation of Communist literature, the prohibition of Communist meetings, and in general were various obstacles presented to the carrying out of the election campaign by the Communists? What measures did the Communist Party intend to take in answer to these acts of persecution and suppression?

3. Were there cases of National-Socialists assaulting Communist workers during this period?

4. During this period were the National-Socialists armed in your region and did they occupy the barracks?

5. Were Communist workers arrested in your district by the National-Socialists or the police?

6. Were questions of terrorist acts and of employing preferably foreigners for this purpose discussed at meetings of the Party organs in your district ?

The public prosecutor sidetracks all Dimitrov's questions. The court retires to consult. But even though the court rejects all the questions, nevertheless, Dimitrov has already spoken to these workers in the Party language which they know. Intimidated by threats, by prolonged imprisonment, by mass murders, the worker witnesses of the prosecution now take heart and steadfastly defend the Communist Party. In answer to the only question which was permitted by the court, they declare that the Communist Party was preparing to answer any suppression of its activity by demonstrations and mass strikes.

The prosecution brings in its second group of worker witnesses. After the very first interrogation of these witnesses in court, Dimitrov puts twelve new questions to them. These questions are intended to rouse the witnesses to speak the truth. The very formulation of the questions helps to expose those of them who have lost heart in the fascist dungeons.

The president of the court gets excited ; he rudely interrupts Dimitrov and demands that the questions cease. But Dimitrov protests that his right of defense is being restricted ; he insists and gets his own way. He puts his questions to the witnesses and these questions throw light on the political situation before and after the burning of the Reichstag. He explains the line of the Communist Party of Germany and exposes the lies of the prosecution. The worker witness listen to him, the whole country is listening to him. They learn from him about their Party, about its transition to an illegal position. They are given a clear idea of those tasks which the Communist Party of Germany is fighting to carry out—the tasks of preparing for a

mass armed uprising. They see how the traitor Fuchs is exposed and are put on their guard against similar renegades and provocateurs. Dimitrov's tactical move is crowned with success.

He declares in sharp tones to the court :

"I know that many of my questions are unpleasant, but that is not my fault. It is not of my own free will that I'm in the dock ; it does not give me any satisfaction to sit here, to put questions and to make declarations. I would like to be at liberty, to be fighting for Communism and working for Communism in my own country. But once I am in the dock, I will fight here on behalf of my views. Many questions will be unpleasant, but it is not my fault that the soup cooked by the prosecution does not taste good. If I am guiltlessly placed in the dock, then I will defend myself like a Communist with all my energy."

THE FASCIST COURT FORCED TO RETREAT

DIMITROV demonstratively demands that the following be called as witnesses : to explain the line of the Communist Party of Germany—Ernst Thalmann, to explain the line and directives of the E.C.C.I.—Comrades Kusinen, Cachin and Katayama. * Moreover, to throw light on the political situation in Germany, he demands the calling of Doctor Bruning, the former prime minister and leader of the Catholic Center Party, of Dusterberg, the second president of the Steel Helmet organization, of General Schleicher, Papen and Hugenberg, the Nationalist politicians, whom Hitler is ousting from power. And at this point Dimitrov formulates his brilliant ten questions, to which he wants to receive answers from them. A magnificent tactical move of the

* Cut off as he was from the outer world, Dimitrov did not know that Sen Katayama had died one month prior to this.

proletarian strategist ! They may not be called into court. But the questions are formulated, they are loudly pronounced before the world, and they are sufficient in themselves to expose these agents of the bourgeoisie, who have ushered in fascist dictatorship in Germany.

The court rejects his demands one after the other. But the court is compelled to listen to his questions, to the arguments he unfolds meanwhile, to his profound political statements. The strength and cogency of his words are irresistible. The court is compelled to retreat all along the line, to surrender its positions one after the other. Every attempt of the counsel for prosecution, the judge, the public prosecutor to hold up the retreat of the court is invariably followed by a counter-thrust from Dimitrov, which stresses the political meaning of the further retreat of the court. Every blow of the enemy is met by a counter-blow—such is the policy of the proletarian leader.

The public prosecutor suggests that the sentences passed against the C. P. G. in 1923 and 1924 on the occasion of various framed trials be read out. The court accepts this proposal.

In answer, Dimitrov makes his own proposal : to read out the sentence passed by the the court on the case of the counter-revolutionary *Putsch* by Hitler and the organization of this *Putsch* in Munich in 1923.

In connection with the attempt that has been made at the beginning of the investigation to connect Dimitrov's name with the explosion in Sofia Cathedral, Dimitrov makes the following declaration towards the end of the trial :

“For several months during the preliminary investigation and and on the basis of this investigation, the German press slandered me as the main organizer of the attempt to blow up Sofia Cathedral. This was intended to help create a corresponding state of feeling, it was meant to pave the way to representing me

as the incendiary of the Reichstag. Now the matter has cleared up. I hope that the *Völkische Beobachter* (the central organ of the Nationalist government) and the whole German press will inform all German public opinion of this fact."

The public prosecutor hastens to justify himself; he is confused, he is convinced that the prosecuting magistracy did not declare that Dimitrov was the organizer of the explosion in Sofia Cathedral.

Towards the end of the trial Dimitrov makes a fresh declaration :

"My proposal to call Thalmann has been rejected, because he is charged with attempting to overthrow the existing state order. Thalmann is accused of attempting to overthrow the existing state order, but he is not convicted of this charge. I propose that the secretaries of Party organizations be called as witnesses. This proposal cannot be rejected on the grounds that they are accused of attempting to overthrow the existing order, since the prosecuting magistracy at to-day's session has called witnesses who are also confronted with this charge. I think it unlikely that all the witnesses who have been called to-day were accused of criminal offenses."

The public prosecutor again hastens to answer Dimitrov that the prosecuting magistracy "did not by any means assert that attempts were everywhere made to organize an uprising."

Dimitrov proceeds to consolidate the position he has won, and launches a fresh attack :

"I take note of the declaration made by the public prosecutor to the effect that, as has been established, there were no attempts at an armed uprising on the part of the Communist Party; but none the less, the secretaries of Party organizations ought to be interrogated as witnesses on the question as to

whether corresponding plans existed, which were only prevented from being put into effect by the measures of Goring.

"It has been stated here that Party center had only to press a button, and an uprising would blaze up. Therefore, the secretaries of the Party organizations ought to be questioned. Don't evade the question, Mr. Prosecutor."

Dimitrov conducted himself in court like an accuser against the bourgeoisie. As a Bolshevik, he conducted the trial brilliantly, according to the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. He has enriched the experience of revolutionary struggle, giving the international proletariat a vivid example of behavior before a bourgeois court.

Lenin taught revolutionaries who are brought before the court of the enemy :

"Lawyers must be ruled with a rod of iron and placed in a state of siege, for this intellectual scum often played dirty tricks. Tell them beforehand : You son of a bitch, if you permit yourself even the slightest impropriety or political opportunism (talk about the immaturity, about the incorrectness of socialism, about the infatuation of Social-Democrats, about their renunciation of violence, about the peaceful character of their teaching and movement, etc., or anything whatever of the kind) then I, the accused, will cut you short and publicly call you a scoundrel there and then ; I will declare that I refuse such a defense, etc. And these threats must be carried into effect."

Dimitrov was assigned an official counsel for defense in the person of a fascist lawyer. From the very start, Dimitrov categorically refused to be defended by him. He himself named eight lawyers whom he proposed should be allowed to defend him. The court refused. More than this, when some of these lawyers attempted to get into Germany, merely in order

to observe the course of the trial, they were either not admitted or expelled from the country (the Bulgarian lawyers, Dechev and Grigorov ; the French lawyers, Moro-Giafferi, Villard, Torres ; the American lawyers, Gallagher and Hayes.)

Thereupon Dimitrov firmly declared that he would conduct his own defense. Dimitrov declared more than once : "The court must bear in mind that I am here not only as Dimitrov, the accused, but also as the defender of the accused Dimitrov." As a Communist before a bourgeois court, Dimitrov was defending his Party and his Communist views. He had to enlarge upon this task and defend his comrades—Torgler, Popov and Tanev ; he had even indirectly to defend the pitiful instrument of the fascist incendiaries, Van der Lubbe. He fully exposed the meaning and the function of the "defense" appointed by the fascist court—a defense which more than once actually helped the prosecution to save itself from disaster, which vanished altogether during the political stage of the trial and did not appear until the concluding act of the frame-up, the judicial comedy.

Dimitrov summarily rejected the services of the "counsel for defense" who was forced upon him. He snubbed Torgler's "counsel for defense," "rulled him with a rod of iron" as soon as he began to "play dirty tricks." The whole stand taken by Dimitrov, the Bolshevik, in regard to the bourgeois defense in court is expressed in his own words at the trial :

"I would rather be guiltlessly sentenced to death by the German court than get an acquittal thanks to such a defense as Doctor Sack has made for the benefit of Torgler."

Dimitrov's whole line in court was aimed at raising the trial to a tremendous political height. He checkmated all attempts on the part of the judges, the prosecuting magistracy the "counsel for defense" to lower the political meaning of

the trial, which was turning out badly for fascism, to reduce it all to legal quibbling. From the very first day he took a direct, independent line in regard to the court :

"At this trial I am not a debtor but a creditor," he told the fascist court.

Returning to the court after being expelled for the first time, he lost no time in declaring :

"I do not look either for mercy or for sympathy in this court. I only demand the possibility of defending myself as a Communist."

When the court went into legal subtleties regarding the *alibi* of Dimitrov and the other Bulgarian comrades, Dimitrov interrupted the judges :

"The most important of the arguments in favour of our *alibi* is the fact that we are Communists, and moreover responsible Communists, who, in view of our Communist convictions and the interests of our Party, could not take part in such an act as the burning of the Reichstag."

When the public prosecutor expressed his doubts in the authenticity of the name of a woman witness, coming from the U.S.S.R., who did not call herself by her husband's name, Dimitrov told the prosecutor that he still had much to learn, that he was revealing ignorance in regard to the Soviet marriage law and to what was happening in the U.S.S.R. in general.

Thus, every word and every speech of Dimitrov at the trial vividly revealed the superiority of the great ideas of Communism over the obsolete philosophy of the bourgeois world.

This was the Leninist position in a bourgeois court. And the whole course of the court enquiry strikingly confirmed the correctness of the Leninist stand taken by Dimitrov.

A MODEL BOLSHEVIK SPEECH

DIMITROV's brilliant speech at the trial embodied Lenin's instructions—that a Communist on trial must deal with questions of principle in his speech: "In any case a speech on the principles, program and tactics of Social-Democracy, on the labour movement, on the socialist aims, on the uprising is the most important thing," wrote Lenin in 1905.

Dimitrov pronounced the speech of a Communist—a speech which was read with breathless interest by every class conscious worker and honest intellectual. This speech made the broadest masses acquainted with the principles, program and tactics of the Communist International. This speech is a most talented model of the speech of a Bolshevik before a bourgeois court. It was an appeal to the toilers of the whole world to fight against fascism, to fight for the victory of the world proletarian revolution. It called upon the workers, upon the toiling peasants, upon all honest intellectuals to take the path of Communism. Over the heads of the fascist judges, Dimitrov was appealing to the proletarians of all countries. To them, and above all to the proletarians of Germany and Bulgaria, he explained what the Communists are fighting for. In his speech, Dimitrov laid bare with paramount precision the basic tasks of the world Communist movement:

"Yes, of course, to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the task of the Communist Parties throughout the whole world. This is our principle, this is our aim."

In the fascist court, he quoted the statutes of the Communist International:

"As the leader and organizer of the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the upholder of the principles and aims of Communism, the Communist International strives

to win over the majority of the working class, the broad strata of the propertyless peasantry, and fight for the establishment of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, for the establishment of a world Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, for the complete abolition of classes and for the achievement of socialism—the final stage of Communist society.” *

From the hall of the Leipzig court, he explained to the toilers how the Comintern is fighting for the realization of its highest aims :

Mass work, mass struggle, mass uprising. The united front, no adventurist acts ! Such is the *alpha* and *omega* of the Communist tactics—thus Dimitrov taught the proletarians of all countries, with profound conviction, based on the mighty experience of his whole work.

No adventurist acts. The Communist International is the world party of the proletariat. This party knows how it will achieve victory. Only with the masses and at the head of the masses will it realize its aims.

In his speech, Dimitrov answered the question which is troubling every honest proletarian : But why has the united front not yet been achieved ? Where is the obstacle ?

Social-Democracy, its policy of class collaboration, its theory of the “lesser evil,” by which it attempts to justify every offensive on the part of the bourgeoisie—that is the main enemy, there lies the main obstacle on the way to the united front. He produced a document of the Comintern which exposes the treachery of the Second International and lays down the conditions for realizing a really militant united front. The traitors, such as Wels, Breitscheid, Leipart and the other leaders of the Second International—it is they who hinder the workers from grasping that supreme wisdom which Goethe closed in verse.

* *Program of the Communist International*, p. 68.

And Dimitrov read out in the fascist court the splendid words of the great German poet :

*Lerne zeitig Kluger sein.
Auf des Gluckes grosser Waage
Steht die Zunge selten ein.
Du musst steigen oder sinken,
Du musst herrschen und gewinnen,
Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leiden oder triumphieren,
Amboss oder Hammer sein.**

And there and then he drew the conclusion :

"The German working class as a whole did not grasp this truth in 1918, nor on July 20, 1932 nor in January 1933."

A profound thought is contained in these words of Dimitrov. With Bolshevik directness he reminded that part of the proletariat which had hitherto followed the Social-Democratic leaders of that share of responsibility which they, too, bear for breaking the united front in the struggle against fascism. In the faces of the fascist judges and of the whole fascist ruling clique he hurled the truth about fascism the truth which every proletarian will understand.

He spoke of "the attempts made by the National-Socialists to destroy the labor movement," of the "cruel principle of the sole rule of the National-Socialists." He reminded the workers once again that the National-Socialist movement is financed by Thyssen and Krupp, the magnates of finance capital.

* *Learn to be more wise in time.
On the mighty scales of fortune
Rarely is the index still.
You must rise or you must sink,
You must either rule or win.
Or you'll have to serve and lose,
Choose to suffer or to triumph,
Anvil or the hammer be.—GOETHE.*

With annihilating irony, Dimitrov attacked the fascists, who called him "an uncivilized Bulgarian," who slandered the Bulgarian people.

"It is not the Bulgarian people who are savage and barbarous. The only savages and barbarians in Bulgaria are the fascists."

And with revolutionary passion he put the question :

"I ask you—in what country are the *fascists not barbarians and savages*?"

Acts of provocation, forgery, incendiarism, the most abominable crimes aimed at deceiving and throttling the masses of the people—such are the time-honored methods employed by the bourgeoisie in the struggle against Communism, against its world Party, Communist International—Dimitrov concluded.

He puts fresh courage and confidence into the German proletariat, bleeding from the blows of fascism. All is not lost, he said :

"Even though it is illegal, the German Communist Party, given the right situation, can effect a revolution. This is shown by the experience of the Russian Communist Party."

Illegal work will claim its victims, but the revolutionary forces, driven underground, will grow strong and will conquer.

On the president's demand, Dimitrov was obliged to cut short his speech and formulate his proposals.

From the dock, he presented the organizers of the trial with a formidable bill to pay :

"Bring into court those who have put us Communists in the dock on a charge of such a dirty business as the burning of the Reichstag." And then and there, frequently interrupted by the startled president, he explained that a bourgeois court has not, of course, the power to do this, that only after the victory of the proletarian revolution will the true culprits

of this and similar crimes of the present regime be brought before a revolutionary tribunal.

He concluded his speech with a denial of the bourgeois court and of bourgeois law, just as he had commenced his speech with the declaration :

"For me, as a Communist, the highest law is the program of the Communist International...For me, as a Communist, the highest court is the Control Commission of the Communist International."

Such was the tremendous and profound political meaning of the last words of Dimitrov at the Leipzig trial. His final speech disclosed his high culture and great erudition. In it, beauty of form is combined with amazing pliancy of wit and resourcefulness and biting irony. It suggests a historical parallel with the burning words of Galileo, the great Italian *savant*, with the great German poet, Goethe. More than thirty times did the chairman interrupt Dimitrov during his speech. And each time Dimitrov swiftly, neatly and wittily parried the chairman's remarks. Sometimes he was able to do this with one word, even by an intonation of his voice. When Dimitrov was exposing fascism, the president interrupted him with the question :

"You are not alluding to political relations in Germany ?"

Dimitrov at once took advantage of the chairman's clumsy and ill-considered question.

"Of course not, Mr. President," came Dimitrov's answer, withering in its irony, causing laughter even among the fascist public in court.

Dimitrov's speech is a vivid document of the world proletarian revolution. For every thinking person this speech embodies a great historical truth—namely, that the working class is now the sole bearer of the further progress of mankind, of the further

development and flourishing of human culture. The proof of this is the Soviet Union—Dimitrov loudly declared to the whole world.

Dimitrov's speech will live in the history of our times. It will be read and studied as a classic example of the speech of a proletarian revolutionary and Communist before a court of the class enemy.

But this speech is not only a historical document. It calls upon the masses to fight against fascism.

THE TRIAL IS ENDED

THE Leipzig trial ended on December 23, 1933. By the verdict of the court the four accused Communists were acquitted. The court was compelled to acquit them because of the blows dealt it by Dimitrov and because of that wave of rage and indignation which was rising among the proletariat of the world.

But, having acquitted all four Communists the fascists still tried, as far as possible, "to save their face." The grounds for the acquittal were alleged to be lack of proofs. The verdict contained a number of charges against the German Communist Party and emphasized that Dimitrov had engaged in secret Communist activity. But all these subterfuges of the court only raised a smile at the expense of fascist "justice," which had sustained a crushing defeat.

However, the fate of the four acquitted Communists was no laughing matter. All four of them—Dimitrov, Popov, Tanev and Torgler—were kept in prison. Evidently Goring was preparing to carry out his threat and to take vengeance on Dimitrov. The fascist pack wanted to settle accounts with the Communists whom the court had acquitted.

Once again a mighty wave of protest arose among the international proletariat. And the fascist tyrants answered it by resorting to new subterfuges.

The fascist officials, interviewed by foreign journalists, either professed ignorance or gave vent to their fury against Dimitrov. "Dimitrov's views are so dangerous," said Erber, an official in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "and his conduct in court was so defiant that the government is now considering the question as to whether it is safe to let him go beyond the borders of Germany."



DIMITROV, POPOV AND TANEV IN LEIPZIG PRISON

In the beginning of February, Dimitrov and the two other Bulgarian Communists were transferred from Leipzig to Berlin. Ever more disquieting news began to come from Germany as to the fate of the Bulgarian Communists. In Berlin they were confined in the underground cells of the secret police. These cells were unlighted. It was impossible to read or to work.

Dimitrov's protest against confinement in prison after acquittal by the court were left unanswered.

Meanwhile, a campaign for the release of the Leipzig prisoners developed throughout the whole world. At huge mass meetings in Paris, the workers elected delegations to visit Germany and to defend the Leipzig prisoners. The fascist government of Germany did not permit the delegations to enter the country. The anti-fascist committee sent its representatives to Berlin one after the other. They were not permitted to see the prisoners. The anti-fascist trial in London continued; letters of protest, telegrams addressed to the chairman of the court, to the public prosecutor, the minister of home affairs, etc., poured in an incessant stream. Stormy workers' demonstrations in all countries demanded ever more insistently, ever more menacingly, the release of Dimitrov and his comrades. This was demanded by the revolutionary press in all countries. This was also demanded by the best representatives of the intelligentsia throughout the world. Even a part of the bourgeois press, under pressure from world public opinion, advised the fascist government in Germany not to disregard the decision of its own court.

The campaign of international proletarian solidarity found its culmination in the action of the Soviet government. The U.S.S.R.—the stronghold of the proletarian revolution—in full consciousness of its unshakable might, was vigilantly and

alertly following the fate of the proletarian revolutionaries in the clutches of German fascism. And with profound gladness proletarians of the world heard the news that the government of the U.S.S.R. had accepted Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev as Soviet citizens. This followed the refusal of the Bulgarian government to permit its subjects to enter the country.

Soon after, the Soviet ambassador in Germany demanded of the German government the release of Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev. The fascist authorities still continued to hedge. Hitler, in an interview with a foreign correspondent, declared that once the court had acquitted the prisoners, this verdict must be carried out. On the other hand, it appeared from an interview given by Goring that the acquitted Communists were not to be released. The world press wrote with indignation that in the camp of fascism an odious bartering was going on for the heads of the Bulgarian Communists.

But the weighty action of the Soviet government did its work. On February 27, almost one year after their arrest, all three Bulgarian Communists were hustled into an airplane without the slightest warning and sent off to Moscow. At the Königsberg airdrome Dimitrov transmitted his farewell greetings to the German proletariat in an original form. He "promised" the police commissar that he would return once more to Germany as a guest of the German Soviet government. On that same evening the proletarian capital in joyful excitement greeted the courageous fighters against fascism—Dimitrov and his two comrades. And that same evening the news of their release and arrival in Moscow was transmitted by radio over the world.

Once again the Soviet proletariat had shown the world its might, its utter devotion to the cause of proletarian internationalism.

DIMITROV IN MOSCOW

"WE are proud of you, Dimitrov!" Warm greetings were heard from all sides.

"I have done my duty," Dimitrov answered.

Have not tens and hundreds of proletarian revolutionaries who are giving their lives for the cause of the proletariat the right to say the same? Each one of them, like Dimitrov, received his schooling in revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Comintern. Lenin and Stalin taught them thus to express in simple, modest words the greatness of their cause, of their self-sacrificing heroic devotion to the proletarian revolution.

On that same evening of February 27, Dimitrov, in an interview with foreign correspondents, gave the following answer to the question, what was he going to do in the future.

"I am a soldier of the proletarian revolution, I am a soldier of the Comintern, and will remain such till my last breath."

In his first article after release, published in the *Pravda*, Dimitrov gave a brief appraisal of the Leipzig trial—an appraisal full of the most profound revolutionary meaning:

"The Leipzig defeat of fascism is the victory of the international proletariat. This victory we owe to the Communist International, founded fifteen years ago in the fire of struggle by our unforgettable teacher and leader, Lenin, and wisely, firmly and correctly guided by the beloved leader, Stalin, who is leading the international proletariat to final victory over the bourgeoisie and its bloodhound—fascism."

And in this same article he emphasizes the immediate tasks confronting the international proletariat in its struggle against fascism:

"Anti-fascist public opinion must not calm down....The struggle for the release of the leader of the German revolutionary workers, Thalmann, the struggle for the release of Torgler, the struggle for the release of thousands of other prisoners of fascism is a question of honor for the international anti-fascist movement." (*Provdá*, March 4, 1934.)

The Leipzig trial is a historic trial. The courageous conduct of Dimitrov at this trial has played and is playing an enormous part in the development of the revolutionary struggle against fascism.

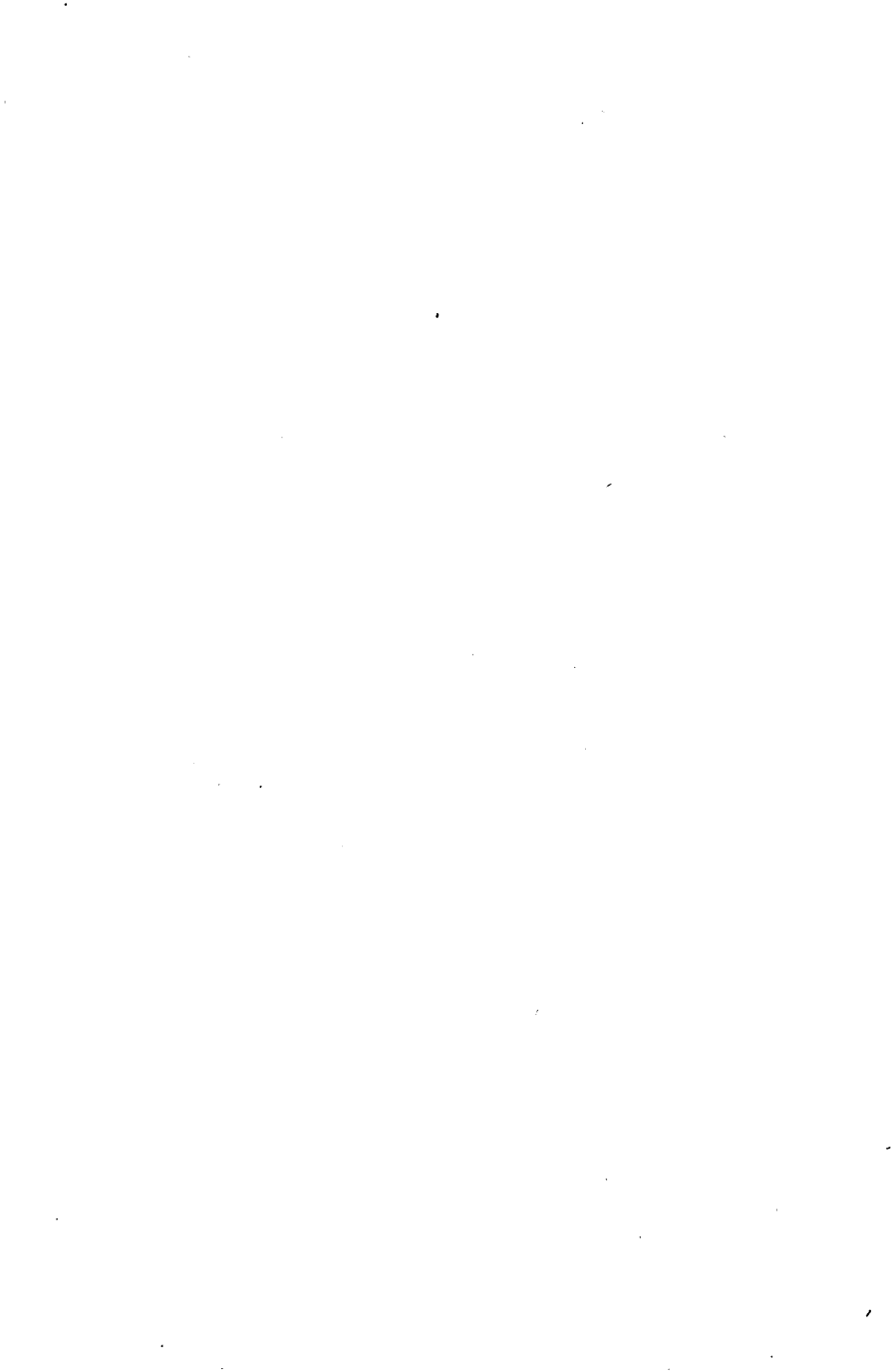
And there can be no doubt that in that mighty struggle against fascism which found vent in the heroic armed struggle of the Austrian proletariat, in the stormy demonstrations and general strike in France and Spain, a great part was played by the example of courageous struggle given by Dimitrov at the Leipzig trial. Dimitrov showed the world once again that fascism is not all-powerful, that it can be given a rebuff, that it is possible to win victory over it. The release of Dimitrov and his comrades has strengthened the international proletariat in the thought that the united front of the workers, led by the revolutionary vanguard, is stronger than fascism and will bring about fascism's downfall in all countries.

In a letter to Dimitrov, a group of Austrian Social-Democratic workers, participants in the recent armed struggle write as follows :

"Had we had such leaders as Comrade Dimitrov, we would have conquered."

In this recognition by Social-Democratic workers of the fact that the masses need leaders of Leninist-Stalinist training and stamina, that they need leaders who have grown up from among the masses, who have been trained by the Comintern, lies the pledge of the success of the united front, the pledge of victory over fascism.

Dimitrov's Speech in Court



DIMITROV'S SPEECH IN COURT*

DIMITROV : In virtue of paragraph 258 of the code of legal procedure, I have the right to speak, as counsel for defense and as accused.

The President : You have the right to make a final speech ; you have leave to do so now.

Dimitrov : In virtue of this code, I have the right to answer the prosecution and then to proceed to my final speech.

Messieurs Judges, Messieurs Counsel for Prosecution, Messieurs Counsel for the Defense. At the beginning of this trial, three months ago, I as accused, addressed a letter to the president of the court. In this letter I wrote that I regretted that my remarks led to clashes. But I raised decided objection to the fact that my conduct was interpreted as premeditated abuse of the right to put questions and make declarations with a view to propaganda. It is clear that once I was accused, though innocent, I would endeavor to defend myself by every means at my disposal.

I admit that some questions have not always been correctly put by me from the point of view of timeliness and form. This, however, is due solely to the fact that I am not acquainted with German law. Besides that, I am taking part in a trial such as this for the first time in my life. Had I been able to choose my own counsel for defense, I would undoubtedly have been able to avoid such incidents, which are detrimental to my own defense. I named a number of lawyers—Dachev, Moro-Giafferi, Campinchy, Torres, Grigorov, Leo Gallagher (America), and Doctor Lemann (of Saarbrucken). But the supreme court, on this pretext or that, refused all my proposals one after the

* The final text of the speech, based on a stenogram.

other. I do not entertain any personal distrust towards Doctor Teichert, either as a man or a lawyer. But in view of the present state of things in Germany, I cannot entertain the necessary confidence in Teichert in the role of official counsel for defense. I am therefore trying to conduct my own defense, in the course of which undoubtedly I sometimes take steps which are incorrect from the judicial standpoint.

In the interests of my defense before the court, and also, I submit, in the interests of the normal course of the trial, I once more—and for the last time—ask the supreme court to give the lawyer, Marcel Villard, who has now received a brief from my sister, leave to participate in my defense. If this last proposal of mine should unfortunately be refused too, then nothing is left for me to do but to conduct my own defense to the extent of my own powers and ability.

After this proposal, too, was refused, I decided to conduct my own defense. Having no need either of the honey or the gall of the eloquence of the counsel for defense who has been forced upon me, I have defended myself the whole time without the help of a lawyer.

Obviously, I do not feel myself bound in any way by the speech of Doctor Teichert made in my defense. It is only what I have said myself hitherto before the court, and what I am about to say now, which has any significance in my defense. I would not like to offend my Party Comrade, Torgler—in my opinion his counsel for defense has already insulted him sufficiently—but I must say outright: I would rather be guiltlessly sentenced to death by the German court than get an acquittal thanks to such a defense as Doctor Sack has given Torgler.

The President (interrupting Dimitrov): It is not your business to engage in criticism here.

Dimitrov : I admit that the language I speak is hard and severe, but my struggle and my life have been hard and severe too. Nevertheless, my language is an open and sincere language. I am accustomed to call things by their proper names. I am not a lawyer defending his client here because he is obliged to.

I am defending myself as an accused Communist.

I am defending my own Communist revolutionary honor.

I am defending my ideas, my Communist convictions.

I am defending the meaning and content of my life.

Therefore, every word pronounced by me before the court is, so to speak, *flesh of my flesh, and blood of my blood*. Every word is an expression of my most profound indignation against an unfair charge, against the fact that this anti-Communist crime is ascribed to Communists.

I have often been reproached that my attitude towards the German supreme court is not a serious one. This is utterly unfair.

It is true that *for me, as a Communist, the highest law is the Program of the Communist International, that the highest court is the Control Commission of the Communist International*.

But for me, as an accused person, the supreme court is a body which must be regarded with all seriousness, not only because it consists of judges having a special qualification, but also because this court is an extremely important organ of the state power, an important organ of the ruling social order, a body which can pass sentence in final form to the highest measure of punishment. I can say with a good conscience that before the court, and consequently also before public opinion, I have spoken nothing but the truth on all questions. As regards my party, which is in an illegal position, I have refused to give any evidence whatever. I have always spoken seriously and with a sense of the most profound conviction.

The President : I will not tolerate your engaging in Communist propaganda here, in this court. You have done this the whole time. If you continue in this spirit, I will deprive you of the right to speak,

Dimitrov : I must decidedly take exception to the statement that I have pursued the aims of propaganda. It may be argued that my defense before the court has had a certain propagandist effect. I admit that my conduct in court may also serve as an example for accused Communists. But this was not the aim of my defense. My aim was to refute the charge that Dimitrov, Torgler, Popov and Tanev, the Communist Party of Germany and the Communist International had any relation to the fire.

I know that nobody in Bulgaria believes in our alleged complicity in the burning of the Reichstag. I know that, generally speaking, hardly any one believes this abroad. But in Germany the conditions are different : here, such a strange allegation may be believed. I therefore wanted to prove that the Communist Party did not and does not have anything in common with participation in such a crime.

If we are to speak of propaganda, then many speeches here bore a propagandist character. The speeches of Gobbels and Goring also had an indirect propagandist effect in favour of Communism, but no one can make them responsible for the fact that their speeches had such a propagandist effect (*Laughter.*)

Not only has the press vilified me in every way—this is a matter of indifference to me—but in connection with me it has also called the Bulgarian people “savage” and “barbarous” ; I have been called “an uncivilized Balkan type,” a “savage Bulgarian,” and I cannot pass over this in silence.

It is true that Bulgarian *fascism* is savage and barbarous. But the Bulgarian working class and peasantry, the intelligentsia of the Bulgarian people are by no means savages or barba-

rians. The level of material culture in the Balkans is undoubtedly not so high as in other European countries, but spiritually and politically, the masses of our people are not on a lower level than are the masses in other countries of Europe. Our political struggle, our political aspirations in Bulgaria are not lower than in other countries. The people which for five hundred years lived under a foreign yoke without losing its language or nationality, our working class and peasantry which have fought and are fighting against Bulgarian fascism and for Communism—such a people is not barbarous or savage. The only savages and barbarians in Bulgaria are the fascists. But I ask you, Mr. Chairman—in what country are the fascists not barbarians and savages?

The President (interrupting Dimitrov): You are not alluding to political relations in Germany?

Dimitrov (with an ironical smile): Of course not, Mr. Chairman....

Long before the time when the German emperor, Charles V, used to say that he talked German only with his horses, when the German nobles and educated people wrote only in Latin and were ashamed to speak German, Kirill and Methodius in "barbarous" Bulgaria were creating and spreading the ancient Bulgarian script.

The Bulgarian people fought with all its strength and all its pertinacity against the foreign yoke. Therefore, I protest against the attack which has been made on the Bulgarian people. I have no reason to be ashamed of being a Bulgarian. I am proud of the fact that I am a son of the Bulgarian working class.

Before coming to the main question, I must mention the following: Doctor Teichert has reproached us that it was our own fault that we put ourselves in the position of being accused of the burning of the Reichstag. To this I must answer that

much time passed between March 9, when we were arrested, and the beginning of this trial. During this time it would have been possible to examine all facts arousing suspicion. During the preliminary investigation I spoke about the burning of the Reichstag with responsible officials of the so-called fire-brigade commission; these officials told me that the Bulgarians were not guilty of the burning of the Reichstag. The charge against us was only that we had false passports, that we were living under assumed names, without notifying the police, etc.

The President : What you are now speaking of has not been referred to at the trial; you therefore have not the right to speak about it here.

Dimitrov : Mr. Chairman, during that time all data should have been verified in order to free us of this charge in good time. In the indictment it is pointed out that Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev affirm that they are Bulgarian emigrants but that despite this it must be regarded as proved that they were living in Germany with a view to carrying on illegal work. The indictment says that they are "plenipotentiaries of the Communist Party in Moscow for the preparation of an armed uprising."

On page 83 of the indictment it is said that although Dimitrov declared that he was not in Berlin from February 25 to 28, nevertheless this does not alter things and does not free him, Dimitrov, from the charge of complicity in the burning of the Reichstag. This may be seen, the indictment further points out, not only from the evidence of Hellmer; other facts also indicate that

The President : you must not read through the whole indictment here; we are sufficiently well acquainted with it.

Dimitrov : I should say that three-quarters of everything which has been said here in court by the public prosecutor and

counsel for defense was well known to everybody long ago, but they nevertheless repeated it here. (*Laughter.*) Hellmer gave evidence that Dimitrov and Van der Lubbe were in the restaurant *Bayrischer Hof*. I will continue reading from the indictment :

"Even if Dimitrov were not caught on the scene of the crime, he nevertheless took part in the preparations for the burning of the Reichstag. He went to Munich in order to establish an alibi for himself. The pamphlets which were found on Dimitrov indicate that he took part in the Communist movement of Germany."

Such was the basis of this precipitate indictment, which has proved to be stillborn.

The President (interrupting Dimitrov) : You must not employ such expressions in regard to the indictment.

Dimitrov : I will try to find another expression.

The President (interrupting Dimitrov) : You must not employ such expression in regard to the indictment.

Dimitrov : I will try to find another expression.

The President : But not such an inadmissible one.

Dimitrov : I revert to the methods of the prosecution and to the indictment in another connection.

The character of this trial was predetermined by the assumption that the burning of the Reichstag was the work of the Communist Party of Germany, even of world Communism. This anti-Communist act—the burning of the Reichstag—was ascribed to the Communists and declared to be the signal for a Communist uprising, the signal for a change in the German constitution. By means of this assumption, the whole trial became invested with an anti-Communist character. In the indictment we read :

"The prosecution holds that this criminal act was to have been a call, a signal for the enemies of the state, who afterwards wanted to carry out a general attack on the German state, in

order to destroy it and to set up in its place the dictatorship of the proletariat, a Soviet state by the grace of the Third International."

Messieurs Judges ! It is not the first time that such criminal acts have been laid at the door of the Communists. I cannot here quote all examples of this kind. I recall the attempt to wreck a train here in Germany, near Juterbog, made by a psychopath, an adventurer, a provocateur. At that time the statement was spread abroad for weeks on end, not only in Germany but in other countries too, that this was a terrorist act by the Communists. Later on, it turned out that it had been done by the psychopath and adventurer, Matuska. He was arrested and condemned.

I recall another example—the assassination of the French President by Gorgulov. Then, too, it was written in all countries that the hand of the Communists could be seen in this. Gorgulov was represented as a Communist, as a Soviet agent. But what happened ? It turned out that this assassination had been organized by white guards and that Gorgulov was a provocateur whose aim was to effect the breaking off of relations between the Soviet Union and France.

I also recall the attempt to blow up the Sofia cathedral. This attempt was not organized by the Bulgarian Communist Party. But as a result of it the Communist Party was subjected to persecutions. Two thousand workers, peasants and intellectuals were savagely murdered by the fascist gangs on the pretext that the Communists had blown up the cathedral. This act of provocation—the explosion in Sofia cathedral—was organized by the Bulgarian police. In 1920 the chief of the Sofia police, Prutkin, himself, organized a bomb outrage during the railwaymen's strike, as means of provocation against the Bulgarian workers.

The President (interrupting Dimitrov) : This has nothing to do with the trial.

Dimitrov : The police official, Hellmer, spoke here of Communist propaganda in the form of arson, etc. I asked him if he did not know of cases where acts of incendiarism, which were carried out by the employers, were afterwards used against Communists. In the *Völkischer Beobachter* of October 5 it was written that the Stettin police....

The President ; This article was not produced at the trial..

(Dimitrov tries to continue.)

The President : Don't dare to speak of this here, since it has not been referred to at the trial.

Dimitrov : A whole series of fires...

(The President again interrupt Dimitrov.)

Dimitrov : This was a subjectt of investigation, beacuse a whole series of fires here were laid to the charge of the Communists. Later on it was revealed that this had been done by the employers "with a view to providing work !" I recall yet another factor—the forging of documents. There has been a large number of forgeries which were made use of against the working class. There have been many such cases. I will recall only the notorious Z.noviev Letter. This letter was never written by Zinoviev. It was forgery. This forgery was used by the English Conservatives against the working class. I recall a number of forgeries which have come to light here in Germany.

The President : This is going beyond the bounds of the court proceedings. .

Dimitrov : It has been alleged here that the burning of the Reichstag was to have served as the signal for an armed uprising. Attempts were made to provide a basis for this in the following manner :

Goring said here in court that at the moment when Hitler came to power, the Communist Party of Germany was compelled to inflame the feeling of its masses and to venture on some act or other. He said: "The Communists were compelled to do something—now or never!" He said that the Communist Party had already, for years on end, been issuing the appeal to struggle against National-Socialism and that at the moment when the National-Socialists seized power, there was no other way out left for the Communist Party of Germany than to act—now or never. The prosecutor of the supreme court has tried to formulate this proposition* more exactly and even more "cleverly."

The President : I will not permit you to insult the prosecutor of the supreme court.

Dimitrov : The prosecutor of the supreme court has enlarged here upon what Goring said in the capacity of supreme accuser. The prosecutor of the supreme court, Doctor Werner, said: "The Communist Party was in such a position that it had either to retreat without a fight or to give battle, even though its preparations were incomplete. This was the only chance which was left the Communist Party in the given circumstances. Either to surrender its aims without a struggle, or to commit a definite act of desperation, *to stake all on one card*—this might still save the situation under certain circumstances. The attempt might fail, but even then the situation would be no worse than if the Communist Party retreated without a fight." The argument here produced, ascribed as it is to the Communist Party, is not a Communist argument. Such an assumption shows that the enemies of the C.P.G. are all acquainted with it. He who wants to fight correctly against his opponent must know his opponent well. The suppression of the Party, the breaking up of the mass organizations, the loss

of legality—all these things of course were severe blows to the revolutionary movement. *But this does not by any means signify that all is lost.*

In February 1933 the Communist Party was threatened with suppression. The Communist press was prohibited, the suppression of the Communist Party was expected. The German Communist Party was expecting this. This matter was spoken of in leaflets, in the newspapers. The German Communist Party knew very well that in many countries the Communist Parties are prohibited, but that notwithstanding they continue their work and struggle. The Communist Parties are prohibited in Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and in several other countries.

I can speak of this on the basis of the experience of the Bulgarian Communist Party. After the uprising of 1923, the Bulgarian Communist Party was prohibited, but it went on working, and although the suppression cost many victims, it has become stronger than it was prior to 1923. Every critically thinking person understands this.

Even though it be illegal the German Communist Party, given the right situation, can effect a revolution. This is shown by the experience of the *Russian Communist Party*. The Russian Communist Party was illegal, it was subjected to bloody persecution, but afterwards the working class, with the Communist Party at its head came to power. The leading minds of the German Communist Party could not reason thus—that now everything is lost that it is either one way or other, either an uprising or ruin. Such foolish thoughts could not be entertained by the leaders of the Communist Party. The German Communist Party was perfectly well aware that illegal work would cost numerous victims and demand self-sacrifice and daring, but it knew also that its

revolutionary forces would strengthen and that it would prove able to carry out the tasks confronting it. It is therefore altogether out of the question that the German Communist Party at that time should have wanted to stake all on one card. *The Communists are fortunately not so shortsighted as their opponents, and they do not lose their heads even in the most difficult situation.*

To this it must be added that the German Communist Party and the other Communist Parties are sections of the Communist International. What is the Communist International? Permit me to quote the statutes of the Communist International.

I will read the first paragraph of the statutes :

"The Communist International—the International Workers' Association—is a union of Communist Parties in various countries ; it is a World Communist Party. As the leader and organizer of the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat, and the upholder of the principles and aims of Communism, the Communist International strives to win over the majority of the working class and the broad strata of the propertyless peasantry, and fights for the establishment of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, for the establishment of a World Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, for the complete abolition of classes and for the achievement of socialism—the first stage of Communist society."

In this million-strong world party of the Communist international, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union represents the strongest party. It constitutes the ruling party of the Soviet Union, the greatest state in the world. The Comintern—the World Communist Party—considers the political situation jointly with the leaders of the Communist Parties of all countries.

The Communist International, to which all sections are directly responsible, is not an organization of conspirators, but

a world party. *Such a world party does not play at uprisings and revolutions.* Such a world party cannot officially say one thing to the millions of its followers and at the same time secretly *do the opposite*. Such a party, my dearest Doctor Sack, does not know double book-keeping !

Doctor Sack : Very well, go on with your Communist propaganda.

Dimitrov : Such a party, when it speaks to the million-strong masses of the proletariat, when it adopts its decisions on tactics and on the immediate tasks, does so seriously, with a full sense of its responsibility. I will here quote a decision of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Since these decisions have been quoted here in court, I have the right to read them.

According to these decisions, the basic task of the German Communist Party consisted in the following :

"To mobilize the million strong masses of the toilers for the defense of their daily interests against their robbery by monopoly capital, against fascism, against emergency decrees, nationalism and chauvinism, and by developing economic and political strikes, by a struggle for proletarian internationalism, by demonstrations, to lead the masses to a general political strike ; the winning over of the main Social-Democratic masses, the resolute overcoming of weaknesses in trade union work. The chief slogan which the Communist Party of Germany must oppose to the slogan of fascist dictatorship—'The Third Empire,' as well as to the slogan of the Social-Democratic Party—'The Second Republic,' is the slogan of a *Workers' and Peasants' Republic*, i.e. of a Soviet Socialist Germany, securing also the possibility for the voluntary affiliation of the people of Austria and other German regions."

Mass work, mass struggle, mass resistance, the united front, no adventurist acts. Such is the alpha and omega of Communist tactics.

A manifesto of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was found on me. I deem it possible to quote this also. In this proclamation two points are of special importance. Thus, it speaks of demonstrations in different countries in connection with events in Germany. It speaks of the tasks of the Communist Party in the struggle against National-Socialist terror, and also of defending the organizations and press of the working class. This manifesto contains the following passage :

The main obstacle in the way of forming the united front of struggle of Communist and Social-Democratic workers was and is the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Social-Democratic Parties, who have now exposed the international proletariat to the blow of the class enemy. This policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie known by the name of the so-called policy of the "lesser evil," has in practice led to the triumph of fascist reaction in Germany.

The Communist International and the Communist Parties of all countries have more than once declared their readiness for joint struggle together with the Social Democratic workers against the offensive of capital, against political reaction and the menace of war. The Communist Parties were the organizers of the joint struggle of Communist, Social Democratic and non-party workers, notwithstanding the leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties, who have systematically broken the united front of the working masses. On July 20 of the last year the German Communist Party, after the Prussian Social-Democratic government had been dissolved by Von Papen, appealed to the Social-Democratic Party of Germany and the German General Confederation of Trade Unions with the proposal to organize a joint strike against fascism. But the Social-Democratic Party of Germany and the German Confederation of Trade Unions,

with the approval of the whole Second International, described the proposal to organize a joint strike as provocation. The Communist Party of Germany repeated its proposal for joint action at the moment of Hitler's coming to power, calling upon the central committee of the Social-Democratic Party and the executive of the German General Confederation of Trade Unions jointly to organize a rebuff to fascism, but on this occasion, too, it met with a refusal. More than this, when in November of last year the Berlin transport workers unanimously went on strike against cuts in pay, Social-Democracy broke the united front of struggle. The practice of the international labor movement is full of examples of a similar kind.

Meanwhile, in a proclamation of the bureau of the Labour and Socialist international of February 19, of the present year, a declaration was published as to the readiness of the Social-Democratic Parties affiliated to this International to set up a united front together with the Communists for struggle against fascist reaction in Germany. This declaration is in sharp contradiction to all the action of the Socialist International and of the Social-Democratic Parties heretofore. The whole policy and activity of the Socialist International heretofore gives ground for the Comintern and the Communist Parties not to believe in the sincerity of the declaration made by the bureau of the Labour and Socialist International, which has put forward this proposal at a moment when in a large number of countries, and above all in Germany the working masses themselves are already taking the organization of the united front of struggle into their own hands.

None the less, in face of fascism which is attacking the working class of Germany and unleashing all the forces of world reaction, Executive Committee of the Communist International calls upon all Communist Parties to make one more attempt to

establish a united front together with the Social-Democratic working masses through the medium of the Social-Democratic Parties. The Executive Committee of the Comintern is making this attempt in the firm conviction that the united front of the working class against the bourgeoisie would repulse the offensive of capital and of fascism and would hasten on to an extreme degree the inevitable end of all capitalist exploitation.

In view of the peculiar conditions of individual countries and the difference of the concrete tasks of struggle confronting the working class in each one of them, agreements between the Communist Parties and the Social-Democratic Parties for definite actions against the bourgeoisie can be effected most successfully within the bounds of individual countries. The Executive Committee of the Comintern therefore recommends the Communist Parties to put forward proposals to the respective central committees of the Social-Democratic Parties affiliated to the Socialist International regarding joint action against fascism and the offensive of capital. The elementary conditions of joint struggle against the offensive of capital and fascism should be made the basis of such negotiations. Without a concrete program of action against the bourgeoisie, any agreement between the parties would be directed against the interests of the working class....

Before the whole international working class the Executive Committee of the Communist International makes these proposals and call upon all Communist Parties, and upon the Communist Party of Germany first and foremost, without awaiting the results of the negotiations and agreements regarding joint struggle with Social-Democracy, immediately to set about organizing joint committee of struggle both with the Social-Democratic workers and with workers of all tendencies.

The Communists have shown by their many years of struggle that they have been—and always will be—in the first ranks of struggle for the united front, not in words but in deeds, in the class actions against the bourgeoisie.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International is firmly convinced that the Social-Democratic and non-party workers, regardless of the attitude which the leaders of Social-Democracy may take to the formation of the united front, will overcome all obstacles and, together with the Communists, will bring about the united front, not in words but in deeds.

Precisely at this time, when German fascism has organized unheard-of provocation with the aim of smashing the labor movement in Germany (the burning of the Reichstag, forged document about an uprising, etc.), every worker must understand his class duty in the struggle against the offensive of capital and fascist reaction.

In this manifesto, nothing is said of a direct struggle for power. This task was not put forward either by the Communist Party of Germany or by the Communist International. But I can say that the manifesto of the Communist International envisages an armed uprising in the future.

From this fact the court has drawn the conclusion that once the Communist Party set itself the aim of an armed uprising, that means that this uprising was being directly prepared for and was to have broken out. This, however, is illogical, incorrect—to say the least of it. Yes, of course, to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the task of Communist Parties throughout the world. This is our principle, this is our aim. But this is a definite program, for the realization of which the forces not only of the working class but also of other strata of the toilers are needed.

Every one knows that the German Communist Party stood for proletarian revolution. But this is not the question which has to be decided at this trial. The question is—was an uprising for the seizure of power really fixed for February 27 in connection with the burning of the Reichstag? What has the court investigation shown, Messieurs Judges? The legend that the burning of the Reichstag was the work of the Communists has completely collapsed. I will not quote here the evidence of witnesses, as has been done by other counsel for defense. This question may be regarded as perfectly clarified for every person with normal reasoning powers. The burning of the Reichstag has not the slightest connection with the activity of the Communist Party—not only with an uprising, but also with a demonstration, a strike, or other actions of a similar kind. This has been fully proved by the court examination. The burning of the Reichstag—I am not speaking of the allegations of criminal and psychopaths—was not taken by any one as the signal for an uprising. Nobody noticed any kind of actions, acts, attempts at an uprising in connection with the burning of the Reichstag. Nobody heard anything about such things at the time. All tales of this kind belong to a much later period. The workers at that time were in a state of defense against the attack of fascism. The Communist Party of Germany was trying to to organize the resistance of the masses, their defense. But it has been proved that *the burning of the Reichstag was the pretext, the prelude to a widely conceived, annihilating campaign against the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party of Germany.* It has been irrefutably proved that responsible representatives of the government had no idea that a Communist uprising was coming on February 27-28.

On this point I put many questions to the witnesses who were called here. First of all I asked Heller, the celebrated.

Karyahne (*laughter*), Frey, Count Helldorf, the police officials. Despite different versions they gave, all of them answered that they had heard nothing to the effect that a Communist uprising was imminent. This means that absolutely no measures were taken on the part of the ruling circles.

The President : However, a statement on this question was presented to the court from the chief of the Western Police Department.

Dimitrov : The chief of the Western Police Department told us in his statement that Goring called him up and gave him verbal instructions about the struggle against the Communist Party—that is to say, about the struggle against Communist meetings, strikes, demonstrations, election campaigns, etc. But even this statement does not say that measures were taken against the direct menace of a Communist uprising.

Yesterday the lawyer Seifert also spoke here about this. He drew the conclusion that no one in the ruling circles was expecting an uprising at that time ; Seifert referred to Gobbels, observing that the latter did not at first believe the news about the burning of the Reichstag. How that may have been in actual fact, is another question.

In this connection another proof is provided by the emergency decree of the German government of February 28, 1933. It was issued immediately after the fire. Read this decree. What is written in it ? It is pointed out there that such and such articles of the constitution are annulled—namely, the articles regarding freedom of organization, freedom of the press, inviolability of the person and of the home, etc. This is the essence of the emergency decree, of its second paragraph. The campaign against the working class...

The President : Not against the workers, but against the Communists...

Dimitrov : I must say that on the basis of this emergency decree not only Communists but also Social-Democratic and Christian workers have been arrested and their organizations suppressed. I would like to emphasize that this emergency decree was directed not only against the Communist Party of Germany—though, of course, against it first and foremost—but also against other oppositionist parties and groups. This law was necessary in order to introduce an extraordinary situation and it is directly, organically connected with the burning of the Reichstag.

The President : If you attack the German government, I will deprive you of the right to speak.

Dimitrov : One question has remained completely unclarified at this trial.

The President : When speaking, you must address the judges and not the public, otherwise your speech may be regarded as propaganda.

Dimitrov : One question has not been cleared up either by the prosecution or by the counsel for defense. I am not surprised that they think this unnecessary. They are very much afraid of this question. This is the question as to what was the political situation in Germany in February 1933. I must dwell upon this question here. At the end of February the political situation was such that a struggle was going on within the camp of the National Front...

The President : You are touching upon a subject which I have already several times forbidden you to refer to.

Dimitrov : I wish to recall my proposal to the court that a number of witnesses be called—Schleicher, Bruning, Papen, Hugenberg, Dusterberg, the second president of the Steel Helmet organization, and others.

The President : But the proposal to call these witnesses was rejected by the court. You must therefore not dwell upon this.

Dimitrov : I know this, and I know why it was done.

The President : It is unpleasant for me to be constantly interrupting you during your final speech, but you must follow my instructions.

Dimitrov : This internal struggle in the national camp was going on in connection with the struggle behind the scenes in the economic circles of Germany. A struggle was going on between the circle of Thyssen and Krupp (the war industry), who for many years on end had financed the National-Socialist movement, and their competitors who were to be pushed into the background.

Thyssen and Krupp wanted to establish in the country the principle of autocratic rule and absolute domination under their virtual leadership, coupled with a considerable cutting down of the living standard of the working class, and for this purpose it was necessary to crush the revolutionary proletariat. The Communist Party in this period was striving to form the united front in order to unite the forces for defense against the attempts made by the National-Socialists to destroy the labor movement. Part of the Social-Democratic workers felt the necessity of the united front of the working class. They understood this. Many thousands of Social-Democratic workers came over to the ranks of the Communist Party of Germany. But in February and March the task of establishing the united front did not by any means signify an uprising or preparations for it; it signified only the mobilization of the working class against the predatory campaign of the capitalists and against the violence of the National-Socialists.

The President (interrupting Dimitrov) : You have always emphasized that you are interested only in the political situation in Bulgaria, but your present remarks show that you have shown very great interest in political questions in Germany.

Dimitrov: Mr. Chairman, you make a complaint against me. I can answer as follows: I, as a Bulgarian revolutionary, am interested in the revolutionary movement in all countries; I am interested, for example, in South American political questions and am probably no worse acquainted with them than with German ones, though I have never been in America. This, however, does not mean that if the building of some parliament in South America catches fire, that will be my fault.

During the court examination here, at the trial, I have learned much and thanks to my political intuition, I have come to understand many particulars. In the political situation of that period there were two basic factors: the first was the striving for autocratic rule on the part of the Nationalist-Socialists. The second—in counterpoise to this—was the activity of the Communist Party, aimed at the creation of a united front of the workers. In my opinion, this came out also during the court examination at the trial.

The National-Socialists required a diversive maneuver in order to distract attention from the difficulties within the national camp and break the united front of the workers. The "national government" needed an imposing pretext for the issue of its emergency decree of February 28, abolishing freedom of the press and inviolability of the person and establishing a system of police repressions, concentration camps and other means of struggle against the Communists.

The President (interrupting Dimitrov): You have gone to the extreme limit. You are making allusions.

Dimitrov: I only want to throw light on the political situation in Germany as I understand it on the eve of the burning of the Reichstag.

The President: This is not the place for allusions regarding the government or for allegations which have been refuted long ago...

Dimitrov : The working class had to defend itself with all its might, and for this purpose the Communist Party tried to organize a united front despite the resistance of Wels and Breitscheid, who have now raised such a hysterical wail abroad.

The President : You should proceed to your defense, if you wish to do so—otherwise you will not have enough time left for this.

Dimitrov : I have already declared that on one point I am in agreement with the indictment. I must now confirm my agreement in this respect. I refer to the question as to whether Van der Lubbe set fire to the Reichstag *alone* or whether he had accomplices. Parisius, the representative of the prosecution, has here declared that the fate of the accused depends on the decision of the question—did Van der Lubbe have accomplices or not? To this I answer: No, a thousand times, no. This conclusion of the prosecutor is illogical. *I hold that Van der Lubbe really did not set fire to the Reichstag by himself.* On the basis of the enquiry of experts and the data of the court examination, I come to the conclusion that the fire in the plenary hall of the Reichstag was of another kind than the fire in the restaurant on the lower floor, etc. The plenary hall was set fire to by other people and with other means. The fire started by Van der Lubbe and the fire in the plenary hall coincide only *in point of time*; in other respects they are *radically different*. Most probably, Van der Lubbe was an unconscious tool in the hands of these people—a tool which they misused. Van der Lubbe is not telling the whole story here. Even now he persists in his silence. The decision of this question does not decide the fate of the accused. Van der Lubbe was not alone, but it was not Torgler, nor Popov, nor Taney, nor Dimitrov, who were with him.

On February 26 Van der Lubbe undoubtedly met some person in Hennigsdorf and told him about his attempts to set fire to a town hall and a castle. This person told him that all these acts of incendiarism were only "child's play." Setting fire to the Reichstag during the elections—that would be a real exploit. Thus, from a secret alliance between political insanity and political provocation the idea of burning the Reichstag first took shape. The ally from the side of political insanity is seated in the dock. The allies from the side of political provocation remain at liberty. Stupid Van der Lubbe could not know that at the time when he was making his clumsy attempts to start a fire in the restaurant, in the corridor and on the lower floor, unknown persons, using the combustible liquid of which Doctor Schatz has spoken, were at one and the same time setting fire to the plenary hall. (*Van der Lubbe begins to laugh. His whole frame shakes with silent laughter. At this moment the attention of the whole court—judges and accused alike—is centred on Van der Lubbe.*)

Dimitrov (pointing to Van der Lubbe): The unknown provocateur took care of all the preparations for the fire. This Mephistopheles has contrived to vanish without leaving a trace. This stupid tool, this miserable Faust is here, but Mephistopheles has vanished. It was most probably in Hennigsdorf that connections were established between Van der Lubbe and the representatives of political provocation, the agents of the enemies of the working class.

The prosecutor of the supreme court, Werner, said here that Van der Lubbe was a Communist; he went on to say that even if he were not a Communist, he nevertheless did what he did in the interest of the Communist Party and was connected with it. This is an incorrect statement.

What is Van der Lubbe? A Communist? Not at all. An anarchist? No. He is a declassed worker, he is a rebellious

Lumpenproletarian—a creature who has been misused, who has been made use of against the working class. But he is not a Communist. He is not an anarchist. Not one Communist in the world, nor an anarchist either would conduct himself in court as Van der Lubbe is doing. Real anarchists commit senseless acts, but in court they answer for them and explain their aims. If any Communist did anything similar, he would not keep silence in court when innocent persons are sitting in the dock. No, Van der Lubbe is not a Communist and not an anarchist; he is a tool who has been misused by fascism.

With this man, with this tool who has been misused, who has been made use of to harm Communism, there can be nothing in common either with the chairman of the Communist fraction in the Reichstag, or with the Bulgarian Communists.

I must recall here that on the morning of February 28 Goring published a statement regarding the fire. In this statement it was alleged that Torgler and Koenig had fled from the building of the Reichstag at 10 o'clock in the evening. This news was circulated throughout the whole country. In the statement it was alleged that the fire was the work of the Communists. At the same time the police did not follow Van der Lubbe to Hennigsdorf. The man who spent the night with Van der Lubbe in the police flop-house in Hennigsdorf was not found

The President (interrupting Dimitrov): When do you intend to finish your speech?

Dimitrov: I wish to speak for another half hour. I must express my opinion on this question.

The President: You can't go on speaking for ever.

Dimitrov: During the three months of the trial you, Mr. Chairman, have compelled me to keep quite an innumerable number of times, promising me that at the end of the trial I would be able to speak at length in my defense. Now this end

has come, but contrary to your promises you again restrict me in my right to speak. The question of Hennigsdorf is one of extreme importance. Waszynski, who spent the night with Van der Lubbe, has not been found. My proposal that a search be made for him was declared to be purposeless. The assertion that Van der Lubbe was in Hennigsdorf in the company of Communists is a lie concocted by the National-Socialist witness the barber, Grawe. If Van der Lubbe had been in Hennigsdorf together with Communists, this matter would long ago have been investigated. Mr. Chairman, nobody was interested in searching for Waszynski.

No search has been made for the plain clothed man who turned up in the Brandenburg district with the first news of the fire in the Reichstag; this matter has not been cleared up to the present day. The investigation was conducted in a false direction. Doctor Albrecht, the National-Socialist deputy, who left the Reichstag immediately after the fire, was not interrogated. The incendiaries were searched for, not where they were but where they were not. They were searched for in the ranks of the Communist Party, and this was incorrect. This gave the real incendiaries the opportunity to vanish. It was decided: Since we have not arrested and did not dare to arrest those really guilty of the fire, we must arrest others—"substitute incendiaries" of the Reichstag, so to speak...

The President: I forbid you to say that. I will allow you another ten minutes.

Dimitrov: I have the right to submit proposals with regard to the sentence and to state my reason for doing so. The prosecutor of the supreme court in his speech said he did not regard any of the evidence given by the Communists as deserving of belief. I do not take a similar stand. I cannot for example, assert that all the National-Socialist witnesses are liars. I think

that among the millions of National-Socialists there are also some honest people

The President : I forbid you to make such malicious attacks.

Dimitrov : But is it not a remarkable fact that all the main witnesses for the prosecution are National-Socialist deputies, journalists and adherents of National-Socialism ? The National-Socialist deputy, Karwahne, said that he saw Torgler together with Van der Lubbe in the building of the Reichstag. The National-Socialist deputy, Frey, declared that he saw Popov together with Torgler in the building of the Reichstag. The National-Socialist waiter Hellmer testified that he saw Van der Lubbe together with Dimitrov. The National-Socialist journalist Weberstedt saw Tanev together with Van der Lubbe. What is this ? Chance ? Doctor Drescher, appearing as a witness—he is the same Zimmermann, who contributes to the *Völkischer Beobachter*

The President : (interrupting Dimitrov) : This has not been proved.

Dimitrov....asserted that Dimitrov was the organizer of the attempt to blow up Sofia Cathedral, which has been disproved, and that he saw me together with Torgler in the Reichstag. I declare with one hundred per cent certainty that Drescher and Zimmermann are one and the same person...

The President : I reject that statement, it has not been proved.

Dimitrov : The police official, Heller, here quoted some Communist verses from a book published in 1925 in order to prove that the Communists set fire to the Reichstag in 1933.

Permit me, in turn, to quote some lines of Germany's greatest poet, Goethe :

Lerne zeitig kluger sein.

Auf des Glückes Grosses Waage.

Steht die Zunge selten ein.

*Du musst steigen oder sinken,
Du musst herrschen und gewinnen,
Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leden oder triumphieren,
Amboss oder Hammer sein.**

Yes, he who does not want to be an anvil, must be a hammer. The German working class as a whole did not grasp this truth in 1918, nor in 1923, nor on July 20, 1932, nor in January, 1933. The blame for this lies on the Social-Democratic leaders, such as Wels, Severing, Braun, Leipart, Grassmann. Now, of course, the German workers can understand this.

Much has been said here about German justice and law and I want to express my opinion on this point too. Without doubt, the political combination of the current moment and the dominating political tendencies are always reflected in the decisions of the court.

The minister of justice, Kerl, is a competent witness for a court of law. I will quote him :

"The *prejudice* of formal liberal law is that the idol of Justice ought to be *objectiveness*. This brings us to the *source of the alienation* between the people and justice, and in the last analysis it is always *justice which is to blame* for this alienation. What is objectiveness at a moment when a people is fighting for its existence ? Does the soldier in battle know objectiveness, does the army in battle know it ? The soldier and the army only know one thing, they only know one consideration, admit only one question : How can I save freedom and honor ? How to save the nation.

"It thus goes without saying that the justice of a people which is engaged in a life and death struggle cannot idolize *dead objectiveness*. The measure taken by courts, prosecution and lawyers

* For translation see p. 86.

should be dictated by *one consideration alone*: What is important for the life of the nation? What will save the people?

"But *spineless objectiveness*, denoting *stagnation* and thereby *ossification, alienation from the people*—no, all actions, all measures of the collective as a whole and of the individual person must be subjected to the daily needs of the people, of the nation.

"And thus, law is a relative conception..."

The President: This has nothing to do with our subject. You must make your proposals.

Dimitrov: The prosecutor of the supreme court has proposed that the Bulgarian accused be acquitted owing to insufficient proof of their guilt. The prosecutor of the supreme court has proposed that the accused Bulgarians be acquitted for lack of proofs. But this cannot possibly satisfy me. The question is not so simple by a long way. This would not remove suspicion. No, during the trial it has been proved that we have nothing whatever to do with the burning of the Reichstag; there is therefore no place for any kind of suspicion. We Bulgarians, and Torgler too, ought to be acquitted not for lack of proofs but because we, as Communists, do not and could not have anything in common with this anti-Communist act.

I propose that the following decision be adopted.

1. That the supreme court acknowledge our innocence in this matter and recognize the charge as incorrect; this applies to us—to me, Torgler, Popov and Tanev.
2. That Van der Lubbe be regarded as a tool made use of to harm the working class.
3. That those guilty of this groundless charge against us be brought to justice.
4. That we be compensated, at the expense of these guilty persons for the time we have lost, for the injury to our health and the suffering we have undergone.

The President : These so-called proposals of yours will be considered by the court when the verdict is discussed.

Dimitrov : The time is coming when such proposals will be carried out with interest. As regards the complete clearing up of the question regarding the burning of the Reichstag and the disclosure of the real incendiaries, this, of course, will be done by the people's court of the coming proletarian dictatorship.

In the seventeenth century the founder of scientific physics, Galileo Galilei, was brought before the stern court of the inquisition, which was to have sentenced him to death as a heretic. With deep conviction and resolution he exclaimed :

"The earth does move all the same !" And this scientific proposition later became the property of all mankind. (The chairman sharply interrupts Dimitrov, rises, collects his papers and prepares to leave.)

Dimitrov (continuing) : We, Communists at the present time can say no less resolutely than old Galileo :

"It does move all the same." The wheel of history is moving, it is moving onward, towards a Soviet Europe, towards a World Union of Soviet Republics.

And this wheel, urged on by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist International, cannot be arrested in its progress by measures of destruction, nor by hard labor sentences, nor by executions. It is moving and will continue to move until the final victory of Communism !

(The police seize Dimitrov and forcibly compel him to sit down.)

The president and the court retire in order to decide whether Dimitrov may continue his speech. After consultation, the court returns and announces that Dimitrov is finally deprived of the right to speak.)



